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DIPLOMATISTS AT SEA

THE Paris wranglings are finished; the peacemakers carry their troubles across the ocean. The meetings in Paris were never, like those at Versailles, a Peace Conference; they were an opportunity given to smaller nations, which had fought on the victorious side, to assert their rights and express their desires. In this sense, as Mr. Bevin said in his valedictory speech, the Conference has "accomplished its task" of considering the five draft treaties and sending them back with recommendations to the Council of Foreign Ministers; but, except in so far as the Big Four had reached agreement at their previous meeting, the discussions in Paris have settled little and reached no finality. Indeed, when Britain and the Dominions abstained from voting on the Article of the Bulgarian Treaty fixing the frontier with Greece, they made fluid once more an issue which the Council's previous agreement that the frontier should be that of January, 1941, appeared to have decided.

On none of the important questions left open by the Big Four did the contributions of the seventeen associate members of the Conference narrow the field of disagreement: instead, their debates crystallised the antagonism between East and West. The concluding plenary sessions merely showed that the dollar-sterling voting bloc outnumbered that controlled by Mr. Molotov. The chief theses of the Slav bloc was that control of navigation and commerce on the Danube should be the exclusive concern of the riparian States, and that the constitution of the Free Territory of Trieste should be "democratic," with the powers of the Governor and of the Security Council strictly limited. This was voted down by a two-thirds majority, which was also secured for the French frontier line dividing Istria. But what effect will these resolutions have when the Big Four, who are not bound to accept any of them, sit down in New York to draft the actual treaties? It may not be necessary to take literally Mr. Bevin's declaration that any treaty not providing for "equal opportunity" in the Danube Valley will be unacceptable to Britain; nor is it certain that Yugoslavia will in the end carry out the threat, dramatically emphasised by the withdrawal of her delegation from the final plenary session, not to sign any treaty with Italy which does not give full effect to Yugoslav aspirations to own Trieste. (In an interview with Mr. Philips Price, M.P., Marshal Tito lately stated that, provided its constitution is satisfactory, and the territory of the enclave fairly defined, he sees no objection in principle to Trieste becoming a Free Territory.) More significance must be attached to Mr. Molotov's final speech in Paris; he made it plain that his conception of his task in the final drafting would be to undo the "incorrect" voting in Paris and to fight against the "anti-democratic" clauses which the Twenty-one Nations had sought to incorporate in the treaties. Unless a greater spirit of compromise and co-operation prevails, the Big Four seem likely to reach a renewed deadlock.

The public now expects deadlock; the man with a future is the statesman who can surprise the world by breaking it. We suggest on another page that a practical, administrative approach to Germany, the most critical and difficult of all the problems before the Foreign Ministers, may succeed where political argument cannot lead anywhere. Is it too late to revert to the "functional" idea of international co-operation which was so prevalent at the end of the war? What are the issues that most vitally affect mankind to-day? Not Trieste or even the Dardanelles, but food, the distribution of raw materials and the use of atomic energy. The Slav bloc, made tougher and more secretive by the quarrels in Paris, is as deeply concerned about all these as are Western nations. The Food and Agricultural Organisation, under the inspiration of Sir John Boyd Orr, has now put forward far-sighted and hopeful proposals for using world surpluses of food for the benefit of the undernourished. Russia is not a member of F.A.O. There is no reason to think that she has finally decided not to co-operate. Again the bedevilling factor in the Middle East is oil, on which Britain, America and Russia base their strategy and their politics. If we cannot agree politically, could we not agree on a scheme for sharing oil? Finally—it is in everyone's mind—have we really said our last word on atomic energy? Examine the American and Russian proposals; they are not necessarily contradictory. Of one thing we are quite sure: none of the nations want war, least of all Russia, which is the most devastated and disorganised by the last war; two rival blocs clashing on political issues and strategic positions are a fatal substitute for the One World which every statesman declares to be necessary. If political agreement is not to be had, another attempt should be made to co-operate about the concrete, everyday things that matter to every man, woman and child in every country.

The French Constitution

The Fourth Republic is born, or at least the date of its birth is now fixed for Christmas Eve, when the Council of the Republic meets and the new Constitution, approved by the Referendum last Sunday, comes into force. But though the period of provisional government is now at last happily over, it remains to be seen whether France has yet finally done with the disturbing element of *le provisoire*: already the political *sages-femmes* of the Right are hinting, before its official birth, that the infant Constitution will require plastic surgery. Out of the total electorate, the "Ayes" in the Referendum represented 36 per cent., and the "Noes" and the abstainers (including those who spoiled their ballot papers) were 31 per cent. and 33 per cent. respectively. The increase in the number of abstentions, from 5 millions last May to over 8 millions, may reflect to some extent the sheer boredom of many voters of all parties at having to go so frequently to the polling booths; but to a greater extent it was probably the consequence of the stand taken by General de Gaulle and the *Union Gaulliste* against the draft Constitution which all three of the main parties had endorsed. In particular, the membership of the M.R.P. was obviously divided and bewildered. Undoubtedly its leaders will realise that, unless the Party's relations with the General are regularised before the general election on November 10, the Left parties will stand to gain. It is significant, therefore, that

M. Maurice Schuman is already describing the Constitution as "imperfect but perfectible." Indications are that the M.R.P. will make common cause with the parties of the Right in choosing constitutional revision as one of the planks in their electoral platform. The new Constitution, indeed, is flexible in that, subject to a referendum, revision requires only a two-thirds majority of the lower Chamber. But what proportion of the French electorate will vote for a party which seeks a mandate to begin tinkering forthwith at a constitution which has just been approved after so painful a pregnancy?

Mr. Jinnah's Tactics

The first effects of the Muslim League's decision to enter the Interim Government should be salutary. It should lessen the fear of "direct action" by the Muslims. But it is doubtful whether the decision can be interpreted as a proof that the League intends to adopt a policy of co-operation. The prolonged and patient efforts of the Nawab of Bhopal, the president of the Princes' Chamber, to find a formula which both parties could accept, ended in failure. What Mr. Jinnah finally did was to accept the invitation not of Pandit Nehru but of the Viceroy to enter the Government, and in so doing he stressed his reliance on Lord Wavell's promises of fair treatment for the five Members who will represent the League. No coalition has been formed; no agreed policy has been accepted; in no real sense will Nehru be Premier, nor will the Government be a Cabinet held together by the principle of collective responsibility. It may be in fact what it is in law, merely the Viceroy's Council, held together by his authority as the arbitrator between its two groups. It seems to be Mr. Jinnah's tactics to bring back the British Overlord into Indian politics as the indispensable arbiter between the "Two Nations." This is an unhappy preparation for Independence. How Congress will react is not yet clear. It may try to insist on the principle of collective responsibility, but even this will be of little avail, if the Muslim group enters the Government in an obstructive and non-co-operative mood. The nomination of Dr. Mondal, provisional president of the anti-Congress Scheduled Castes Federation, certainly has a provocative look. Nothing can go happily until Congress and League adjust their differences over the broad outlines of the future Constitution.

China's Civil War

The fall of Kalgan to Chiang Kai-shek's American-equipped armies increases his control of the main Chinese railway communications and chief centres. Although the Communist guerillas are spread widely over the Chinese countryside, their main concentration is now in North Manchuria, centred on Harbin, where it is unlikely that Chiang Kai-shek will risk all-out positional warfare. The efforts of General Marshall and Dr. Leighton Stewart to bring about a truce have failed; the stage seems set for a long-drawn-out civil war. The Communist armies trained in guerilla warfare will avoid pitched battles, as they did in the case of Kalgan. They are far less well-equipped than the Kuomintang armies, but their morale is far higher; their level of military and, particularly, of political education is much sounder; and, above all, they are gaining increasing support from the Chinese peasants and farmers by their programme of agrarian reform. The Kuomintang is now at the parting of the ways: it could still prevent civil war if it were prepared to put forward and implement the long-promised programme of land reform and economic rehabilitation which the Chinese people need to-day as never before in their history. But while the policy of Washington continues to subordinate the needs of China to her own Pacific strategy against the Soviet Union, there is little hope that China can return to the principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

Arming the Greeks

The guerilla movement in Thrace and Macedonia continues to spread in spite of large-scale military operations by the Greek Second Corps and widespread repression of Left and Centre organisations. Many thousands of political prisoners have been deported merely by resolution of a Security Committee or judgment at a summary court martial. In Macedonia alone, since the plebiscite, there have been fifteen death sentences and two thousand arrests prior to deportation, while the offices of democratic groups and newspapers have been closed. The ineffectiveness of the military campaign is due in part to the unreliability of the troops, many of whom sympathise with the guerillas, although the Army has been purged of Republicans as far as possible. Faced with this situation, the Royalists now talk of requesting Britain to supply arms to equip a peasant militia. This can be recruited without even nominal political impartiality and used to supplement regular troops in checking the activities of the guerillas. Since the Greeks are still financially unable to maintain even their present Army, Britain is to continue direct financial and military support until next March, while the Greek desire for still more Army equipment is, according to Mr. Mayhew, under consideration. The British Government has not yet received an "official" request to arm the Royalist peasants. Tsaldaris no doubt feels that if he can get sufficient help to tide over his present troubles, winter will put an end to the guerilla bands in the mountains.

The President Gives In

Mr. Truman has surrendered to that section of the American people which wished to do away with price controls. Their propaganda was that such controls would limit supply, and they had managed to make this story come true in the meat industry. The President's description of the unscrupulous tactics used by his opponents was truthful, but hardly an adequate excuse for surrender to them. It is true that there is plenty of meat in America, and that profiteers are holding it back from the market; it is true that the present meat famine is due not to controls but to the emasculation of the Administration's plan for controls: it is, above all, true that Congress is responsible for this refusal to pass the legislation necessary to control prices throughout the nation and thus ensure supplies. But that does not lessen the sad truth that the President has failed in his role as representative of all the people against the special interests. Removing controls on meat three weeks before the November election may give a slight temporary popularity to the Democrats. It is unlikely to result in such a shift of opinion that the President will not be faced with a more recalcitrant Congress in January than that which botched the control plan in June. In that case such surrenders to *force majeure* will be repeated frequently, and the control of American domestic policy will be in the hands of "the selfish men" whom Mr. Truman condemns.

Russian Trade With Sweden

In spite of earlier American attempts to restrict the scope of the economic negotiations between Sweden and the Soviet Union, an agreement was finally signed last week. It provides for a short-term Swedish credit to Russia of about thirty-five million pounds and a further seventy million pounds for fifteen years. Although the total amount is not large compared to Russian requirements of industrial equipment and manufactured goods, for which Moscow can find neither dollar nor sterling credits at present, it is the first success the Russians have had in their post-war search for foreign credits. By the agreement, Sweden will get larger supplies of coal, the most serious shortage in an economy greatly dependent on the efficiency of its machine industry. Although there was some opposition to the agreement from Right-wing political groups, it has been welcomed by important industrialists as well as by the moderate parties on the grounds that it will help to stabilise Sweden's international position. Economically, it means that about a tenth of the country's exports will be diverted to the Soviet Union. Politically, however, it reinforces the Swedish Government's efforts to find a neutral "middle-way" between her powerful neighbour and the more distant Western democracies with which its Social-Democratic sympathies lie. This credit, coming after the comprehensive Russo-Danish agreement, will go a long way to establish stable trade and political relations between all the Scandinavian countries and the Soviet Union.

Lancashire and Labour Shortage

Since any move which lessens our economic dependence on the United States is welcome, it is good news that negotiations have been completed for the purchase by Britain of substantial quantities of raw cotton from the U.S.S.R. The problem of Lancashire, however, is to be measured in terms not of raw cotton shortage but of deficiency of labour, particularly in spinning. The restoration of an adequate labour force, to which the Working Party looked, is falling badly behind schedule; next year's probable production of yarn is put at no higher than 750,000,000 lb., as compared with 1,300,000,000 lb. before the war; and, though little has been done to make good the acute shortage of cotton textiles in British shops, exports of cotton cloth are now barely 40 per cent. of the 1938 volume. There is little hope of attracting more labour or of increasing output per worker unless the mills are radically modernised. It looks as though the Working Party's belief that this could be done without public ownership of the industry was unduly optimistic.

The Nation's Wards

The Government, we hope, will lose no time in carrying out the main recommendation of the Curtis Committee, that a special Children's Branch, attached to one or other of the Departments, should have centralised responsibility for caring for the welfare of children deprived by fate or an award of the Courts of normal home life; and that the policy of this Branch should be executed by Children's Officers working under special committees of local authorities. The facts adduced by the Committee as to existing conditions are disquieting: while responsibility is shared among half a dozen overlapping departments, an immense amount of needless suffering is caused to children in dehumanised institutions, ill-supervised voluntary orphanages and under-inspected foster-homes. The extent to which the institution should be superseded by a better organised "fostering" system or by small "group committees" under carefully chosen, sympathetic management will have to be worked out gradually as the result of experiment and trial. The main thing at the moment is to establish the special responsibility of a single authority for the care of these children, who number to-day about 125,000, and to introduce, through local authorities' Children's Officers, a real personal element in looking after their material and psychological background.

The Fair Wages Clause

The Tory attempt to turn the ratification of the Fair Wages Clause into a debate on the "closed shop" was naturally defeated. The new resolution, which supersedes that of 1909, was agreed between the Coalition Government, the T.U.C. and the Employers' Federation during the war. Mr. Strauss wanted to amend the Clause, which (as now drafted) lays down that a Government contractor "shall recognise the freedom of his workpeople to be members of trade unions," to read "of any trade union."

In most cases, the change would make no practical difference, but it might sometimes produce very awkward results. It would leave the way open for a contractor to form a company union or to encourage a number of rival unions and prevent any one of them from effectively representing the majority of his workers. Mr. Strauss wanted to twist the Clause to restrain an employer from making an agreement to employ members only of a particular union or group of unions. The Government, on the other hand, has made it clear that it intends to treat the question of the closed shop, not as a general issue, but as matter for negotiation between trade unions and employers in special cases. This seems to be the right method. There is no general trade union demand for the closed shop, but there is a strong argument for it in certain firms or industries, such as coal mining or the L.P.T.B. The Fair Wages Clause embodies a sensible and widely accepted principle: it would have been stupid to make it a vehicle for prescribing the closed shop when both trade union and employer regard it as necessary for effective collective bargaining.

The Transport Protectors

The attempt of the transport interests to furbish up their plan of co-operation, published some time ago, as an alternative to the Government's nationalisation policy is not likely to cut much ice. It is clear that a system designed to distribute traffic in the most economical way and to cut out wasteful duplication must be based on both common ownership and common direction of a unified transport service. It is true that an organisation as large as this solution requires will have to be broken up in order to avoid the dangers of bureaucracy; but the right lines of devolution for it are surely, in the main, regional and local rather than sectional. What is wanted is not a series of organisations each responsible for a single kind of transport, with only central co-ordination between them, but a series of unified regional systems, with central control based on regions rather than separate kinds of service. As for the demand that nationalisation should be held in abeyance pending "impartial" enquiry into each case, what does it mean? Who and where are the "impartial" persons whose judgment is to be accepted as binding upon the Government? Nationalisation is a controversial political issue, on which judgment can be passed only by the electorate which returns one party in preference to another to power. The Labour Party clearly pledged itself in its election programme to carry through the transfer of certain key industries and services to public ownership; and the electors sent it back with a large majority in the expectation that it would do as it had promised. There is, on that score, nothing to enquire into, about transport or gas or electricity any more than about coal mining. The decision has been democratically taken: all that remains is to give effect to it as speedily as possible.

They Also Win

The London hotel and restaurant workers have won a complete victory. The employers have given full recognition to the National Union of General and Municipal Workers as the appropriate body to represent catering workers, and have promised to negotiate a comprehensive agreement. There was never any doubt that the strikers had a strong moral case. They rightly enjoyed public support in their demand for trade union rights. The injunction obtained by the Savoy management did not affect the outcome of the strike, but it raises an important matter of principle. Are the wartime regulations designed to limit strikes to be retained indefinitely? The retention of price controls and arbitration machinery should not be made an excuse for making strikes illegal. A strike is, on occasion, the only means open to workers; it is certainly not clear that hotel employees would have won ordinary trade union recognition without striking.

PARLIAMENT: Signs of the Times

Wednesday

The Tory sense of values grows more and more peculiar. On Tuesday the Big Shots, including Mr. Assheton and Mr. Oliver Stanley, were there on the front bench to defend Christianity, liberty and the coinage from Socialist debasement. But the Chancellor, fresh from his American trip, got his Second Reading in record time. In contrast, when the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Atomic Energy Bill were taken last Friday, Tory numbers sank to four. It was left to a hard-working group of Labour M.P.s, headed by Donald Bruce and Raymond Blackburn, to undertake the constructive criticism of the Bill. On the issues of secrecy and consultation with the scientists the group had to be content with some very smooth assurances.

On Monday, the Chamber was well filled all day, though the business was quite unimportant. George Isaacs, in an excellent speech, moved a motion renewing, in Government contracts, a fair wages clause identical with that passed by the Coalition Government in 1942. But this did not deter the Tories, still breathing the ozone of Blackpool, from trying to stage a full-dress debate by means of a verbal amendment, on the general issue of the closed shop. The resulting discussion was ragged and unsatisfactory, since the Deputy Speaker was determined to keep it strictly to the terms of the Amendment, and the Government spokesmen were therefore able to postpone any statement on the central issue. However, back-benchers on both sides were not so squeamish. H. Strauss moved the Tory amendment in a clever lawyer's speech, and was answered with equal legal ability by Sidney Silverman. Ness Edwards spoke well, without dealing with the amendment itself; he enabled Harold MacMillan to give a display of that old-time Union banter which so ill becomes him.

The House then turned to a subject ideally suited for post-prandial discussion—a Prayer to annul the Nurses' Amendment Regulations 1946. The issue was whether Christian Science nurses should in future be permitted to call themselves nurses, and the Prayer was moved by Alfred Edwards and Geoffrey Cooper, two Socialist devotees of Mary Baker Eddy. They were followed by Wilson Harris, self-appointed defender of the King's English, who protested against the cribbing and confining of a good old English word. Fred Messer, who really knows the subject, brought the debate back to reality by reminding the House that the Nurses' Charter would be meaningless if any untrained person could claim the title, and the Minister of Health put as much energy and wit into his reply as if he had been winding up a serious debate.

Fred Bellenger's handling of the sentences on the Paratroopers last week has continued to be an embarrassment. How much stronger his position would have been if he had quashed the sentences on the merits of the case and not relied on legal irregularities.

Foreign affairs is a topic of conversation outside the Chamber, but there has only been one minor debate when Francis Noel-Baker raised the Spanish issue on the adjournment. He made a restrained and most conciliatory appeal to the Government and was supported by Leah Manning. Everyone expected a constructive reply from Hector McNeil. Instead, he put his back to the dispatch box and spoke as though he was an officer haranguing some recalcitrant Red Devils. This departure from his usual attitude was unhelpful both to the Government and to Spanish democracy.

PHINEAS

A PLAN FOR GERMANY

BEYOND the Foreign Ministers' immediate agenda in New York lies the still unsolved problem of Germany. Inspired rumour concerning "the Berlin brief" prepared for Mr. Bevin already suggests that it contains drastic proposals for the revision of the Potsdam Agreement which are likely to meet with French and Russian opposition. If this is so, the chances of a Four Power Agreement on Germany are small indeed. Britain alone is in a position to put forward a policy for Germany which might lead to an integrated Europe. But, to do so, Mr. Bevin will have to take his stand against rebuilding German economy on the basis of American free enterprise.

It is deeply disturbing to observe that Ministerial statements have seemed to support the contention that the main British interest in Germany at the moment is to reduce the burden on the British taxpayer. In comparison with the thousands of millions which we spent on defeating Germany, £80,000,000 a year is a trifling contribution, provided that it is really assisting in the destruction of German militarism and the integration of Germany into a United Europe. To permit the Treasury outlook to determine our policy to Germany would be short-sighted folly.

Unfortunately there are indications that, when he starts his discussions with his three colleagues, Mr. Bevin will already be partially committed to the American point of view. The merger of the British and American Zones is already taking place, and it has been stressed that one objective of this merger is to reduce our financial commitments. This can only be done on the assumption that American Big Business is encouraged to obtain controlling interests in German industry, and the German Trusts are reconstructed on American credit. If, for instance, General Motors buys up the *Volkswagen* factory, United Steel obtains a controlling interest in the *Vereinigte Stahlwerke* and Dupont in *I.G. Farben*, then, it is thought, a reduction in the costs of a joint Anglo-American control can be secured.

This no doubt is what Mr. Byrnes means when he states his determination to "rebuild democracy" in Germany. German labour is both skilled and cheap; and the visit to Berlin of Mr. Allen, director of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, suggests that the U.S. plan is to provide dollars for reviving Western Germany as part of an American economic empire—which would include Britain. It is because they see in the constitution and policy of the new inter-zonal economic agencies a move in this direction, that the German Social-Democrats have threatened to withdraw from all responsible posts in the British Zone. They are not prepared to commit political suicide by conniving at the rebuilding of the German Trusts, with or without Anglo-American financial control. Their relative lack of success in the recent elections is probably an indication that they are already compromised in German eyes.

This puts Mr. Bevin in a difficult position. Without American dollars, the fusing of the two Zones will actually increase the cost of occupation for the British taxpayer. Mr. Hynd had apparently hoped that food imports into the British Zone would be reduced if we obtained access to the agricultural surplus of the American Zone. But the system of federalization, which has transformed the three *Lände* of the American Zone into virtually autonomous puppet States, makes it impossible to collect this surplus. The result is that, while we shall pool with the Americans the industrial production of the British Zone, we may receive very little in exchange. Hence the temptation for purely budgetary reasons to accept American financial domination of both Zones and to restore the worst evils of the Weimar Republic. Already we are drifting in this direction.

Yet the fact remains that, whether Germany is administered as a single unit or divided between East and West, the only basis for a healthy reconstruction is centralised Socialist planning, including State ownership of the basic industries and services and drastic land reform. Throughout devastated Europe State Socialism has become a necessity for survival, and even such Right-wing Parties as M.R.P. in France accept this as self-evident. If we in Britain still believe in "gradualism," that is because, having escaped occupation, we have not witnessed, like our friends on the Continent, the wholesale collabora-

tion of business and finance with the Nazis. Europe, including Germany, is politically far to the Left of Great Britain; and British policy in Germany, to meet German requirements and to satisfy our European Allies, must be far more "extreme" than the Government's domestic programme. If, for the sake of reducing by a few million pounds the cost of occupation, Mr. Bevin accepts American leadership in Germany, he will thereby forfeit British influence. Russia will appear to all Europe, including France, as the one Great Power which understands the German problem and Europe's needs. Accepting American dollars to fight Communism, Mr. Bevin would confirm the division of Europe and drive the working class in every country into support of Communism.

A Socialist plan for Germany is therefore a vital British interest for which we must be prepared to pay a heavy price. We, in common with Russia and every European nation, need a Germany militarily impotent and economically integrated with her neighbours. In New York Mr. Bevin will have the chance of proving to France and Russia that we are not merely an American aircraft carrier off the coast of Europe.

To break the deadlock between East and West and also between France and Britain, what is needed is a bold British plan for the administration for a unified Germany. We should propose in the first instance a Five Year Plan for German economy, allocating German surpluses among the Allies according to their needs and laying down the targets for German production. Such a plan would provide an incentive for hard work by promising the Germans that they would receive increasing proportions of the goods produced according as they achieved or surpassed their targets. The prime task of the Control Commission would be to tell the Germans what was required of them and what they would receive in return for fulfilling these requirements.

It may be objected that this is merely an attempt scientifically to exploit Germany as a source of reparations. But that is precisely what is required at the moment both for the achievement of inter-Allied unity and for the good of Germany. At present, the Russians and the French are seeking, often short-sightedly, to obtain everything which they can from their own Zones, while the British and Americans—who have not the same urgent needs of reparations, and control food-deficit areas—are being forced to pay heavy subsidies. But it cannot be assumed that for this reason the German in the West is better off than the German in the East. Just because the Russians are determined to exploit their Zone, the German population is at least fully employed and lives under a rationing system designed to benefit those who work hard. Having given them their orders and selected a political leadership which they trust, the Russians leave the Germans very largely to fend for themselves. In the British Zone, on the other hand, where exploitation is limited to the assisting of our domestic housing programme by shipping out large quantities of timber, there is widespread unemployment. Having no policy we provide the Germans with no targets and no incentives and maintain a vast horde of Control officials to supervise the detailed application of a policy of *laissez faire*. The Russians are not unpopular because they exploit the Germans, but because the Germans fear Bolshevik domination. Equally the Germans are not pro-Western because we take no reparations from them, but simply out of their dislike of the Russians.

On the economic side, therefore, any British plan for Germany should accept a great deal of the economic policy, in particular the centralized planning procedure, at present employed in the Russian Zone. Instead of carping at Russian deviations from Potsdam, which have resulted in economic revival in their Zone, we should propose that these deviations be accepted as the principle of a plan to be applied to Germany as a whole. If he did this, Mr. Bevin would remove one of the chief obstacles not only to Anglo-Russian, but to Anglo-French collaboration. On the other hand, he should welcome the proposal for American credits on condition that they are exclusively employed to stabilise the currency and to provide capital for State-owned industry. The management of such industry would have to be put securely in the hands of Socialists and trade unionists, even at the cost of temporary loss of efficiency. In this way the foundations of a genuinely Socialist German State could be laid.

The execution of such a Five Year Plan would involve the reconstruction of the Inter-Allied Control Commission. Long ago General Eisenhower warned Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill that inter-Allied control would only be effective if it were administered by an integrated staff on the lines of SHAEF. Experience has confirmed the General's view. In Berlin today there is not one but four Control Commissions, and they spend as much time controlling each other as in supervising the Germans. Any British plan for Germany therefore should include the proposal for the creation of a single Control Commission in Berlin under the command of one Commander in Chief with three Deputies from the other Powers. Unrra has already proved that a genuine inter-Allied staff is a practical possibility.

It will be observed that these proposals are functional rather than political in character. Time after time we have seen that whereas inter-Allied unity is impossible as long as politics are discussed, it can be achieved below the political level. If the German problem is approached in the first instance as a purely economic and financial problem—how to make Germany capable of fulfilling the requirements of the Allies and how to distribute the surpluses among the Allies—there is at least a chance of an agreed plan. But if the Foreign Ministers begin by discussing democracy or denazification, an *impasse* is unavoidable.

And many political problems can be tackled on a functional basis. A five-year plan, for instance, would obviously involve the formation of a series of centralized German Ministries—communications, posts, finance, are the most obvious examples. Economic planning of industry and agriculture would have to disregard Zonal barriers and would lead to the creation of German Agencies, probably in the form of State Trusts, to execute the inter-Allied plan. In this way a gradual approach could be made to the formation of a central German Government.

A British plan, boldly conceived on practical Socialist lines, would at least force the other three Powers to reveal their real intentions. By proposing to the Russians that the methods which they have already imposed on their own Zone should now be employed over the whole of Germany, it would cut away some at least of the Russian objections to unified control. Russia would stand to obtain more reparations under such a plan than she does from the exclusive exploitation of her own Zone. The same principle applies to the French, who could hardly resist a plan which increased their share of reparations and insured against the revival of German militarism by the abolition of the German Trusts. No doubt the Americans would have most to find fault with. But it should not be impossible to persuade them that the only way of combating the "Communist menace" is by adopting the middle way of State Socialism combined with the greatest measure possible of political democracy.

Mr. Bevin's chief difficulty is that the principles of such a plan are at variance with the present practice in the British and American Zones. But it is not too late to remedy this defect. Indeed it is vital that, even if the Russians refuse to come in, the principles which we have outlined above should be applied in the British Zone. Under any circumstances it would be madness to consent to its Americanization; and Mr. Bevin should make it clear in New York that whether or not the other Great Powers agree to collaborate, he is determined not merely to support the Social-Democrats but to impose Socialist planning at least in the British Zone.

TARGETS

The Balance of Payments

In the series of articles of which this is the first we propose to review the achievements and shortcomings of the Government's economic policy in much the same way as we have recently reviewed its record in international affairs. The questions which we propose to ask fall into four groups. First, in the present article, we shall try to see what are the prospects, along present lines of policy, of achieving a satisfactory "balance of payments"—that is, of being able to secure, without further borrowing, the means of paying for the imports which we must have in order to give our people an ample, varied and satisfying diet, and to keep our industries supplied with the materials and the capital goods which they need in order to work at high efficiency under conditions of full employment. Secondly, we shall ask whether the Government's policy is based on a reasonably correct use of our very limited supply of man-power, and bids fair to make the best and most efficient use of our home resources in meeting the consumer's needs. Thirdly, we shall try to see how far the projects so far disclosed for planning the future location of industry and population look like bringing about a better balance of town and country and a better local and regional distribution of openings for employment. And, fourthly, we shall enquire how far, in the light of present policies, both internal and international, there seems to be a good prospect of our being able to maintain "full employment" even in face of depression and crises abroad.

The first problem—that of the balance of payments—is crucial. At present, we are making international ends meet by using the recent American and Canadian loans to pay part of our annual bill for imports, by exporting a good many things which home consumers would very much prefer to keep for themselves, and, last but not least, by continuing to "block" by far the greater part of our sterling debts incurred during and since the war. To get our balance of payments into a satisfactory state we need to raise our exports to a level that will not only pay for current imports but will also meet the charges accruing from 1951 onwards on our post-war loans from abroad and contribute whatever is needed towards the liquidation of our sterling debts. Indeed, over and above this, we need to provide considerable capital sums for colonial development, to meet the current costs of such armed forces as we decide to maintain abroad, to finance the occupation of the British Zone in Germany, and, if we can, to have something left over for lending to needy countries which can buy British goods for their own economic development only if they can borrow the wherewithal.

The nearest thing to an official estimate of what this means in terms of exports is that we shall require to raise the *volume* of British exports to something approximating to 75 per cent. above the pre-war level. This estimate is certainly not too high, if we are to meet the repayments due on the American loan and to satisfy with reasonable adequacy the claim of India to cash in on a substantial part of its sterling balance for purposes of internal economic development. For the time being, of course, it is easy for us to sell in the world market everything we can spare out of our current production, including a good deal of a sort that we cannot much longer do without at home; and under these conditions we have concentrated largely on making what we have found easiest to make by diverting war factories to production for export. Even so, our exports have barely reached the pre-war volume—far short of the 75 per cent. over the pre-war total that is needed. The lack of any exportable surplus of coal is one factor in keeping the total down; and another is the difficulty that is being experienced both in re-equipping industries whose plant was allowed to run down during the war and in securing enough workers to re-man the

depleted export trades, which in many cases were kept going before 1939 on a basis of low wages and bad working conditions. Added to these factors is a continuing shortage of many necessary materials, such as timber, and in some cases a shortage of skilled workers and technicians, as distinct from a general shortage of labour.

Hitherto, there has been in effect no competition in the world market. The Germans are out of action; so for the present are the Japanese; and the Americans have been too busy meeting domestic orders to spare much energy for pushing their wares abroad. This situation obviously will not last; and before long our power to sell goods abroad will again depend on the prices we ask for them, and also, to an increasing extent, on the credit terms we are able to give. It is true that, so far, the recovery of our export trade has been a good deal more rapid than most people thought possible a year ago; but this is partly because the British people have put up with more austerity than a Tory Government could have persuaded them to accept, and partly because there has been a great deal less American competition than was regarded as likely. Any substantial downward movement of American domestic demand would certainly lead to much more pushing of American exports. Further, the crowds who have been to see the "Britain Can Make It" Exhibition, patient as they are, can hardly be expected to wait for ever.

The testing time for British export trade is still to come. It will come when foreign competition begins effectively to revive, when the more clamant demands from starved countries have been met, and when British consumers insist on getting their share of what is going, and are no longer prepared to see the export market given the first pick. What will happen then depends partly on the success of British industry in increasing its efficiency—which is a matter of the workers' willingness to give of their best, as well as of better plant and more efficient factory management—and partly on the conditions under which world trade has to be carried on.

It is still quite unknown how far we shall be called on in practice to implement the conditional pledges which we gave to the Americans as a condition of getting the loan. We know that we must within a single year remove all controls over current international monetary transactions and bring to an end the wartime "dollar pool" which has regulated the Empire's demand for dollars. What we do not know is whether we shall also be called on to renounce all Empire preferences and to refrain from all commercial agreements involving any element of bilateral bargaining. We are pledged to support the Americans at the forthcoming World Trade Conference in urging the abolition of both these things; but we are under no pledge to act ourselves in the way proposed unless other countries do so as well, or unless the Americans substantially lower their own tariff barriers. We can perhaps hope that any agreement which does emerge from the World Trade Conference will be a good deal less hampering than the "Proposals" to which we have been coerced into giving our official support. We badly need to keep all the freedom possible and to make commercial bargains that will give us both imports at reasonably stable prices and assured markets for our exports when the existing sellers' market ceases to exist. We are entitled to hope that other countries will save us from the consequences of the sheer compulsion which the Americans put upon us during the loan negotiations; and it is a pertinent point that the Dominions are in no way bound by any pledges into which we were forced to enter.

It is difficult to see how, without what the Americans denounce as "bilateral bargaining" in some form, we can possibly hope to get and pay for the imports that we must have if we are to be tolerably fed and are to maintain our standards of living at a satisfactory level. Perhaps if all the world is prosperous and the Americans buy extensively in the world market and do not push export because they have abundant outlet among their home consumers, it may be possible for us to go on increasing exports as our own production capacity revives, and so to be able without any special expedients to meet our own bills for imports. But even on such highly optimistic assumptions we could hardly redeem any considerable proportion of our sterling debts to India unless we could be assured of India's taking payment in British goods and not calling on us to supply dollars to finance purchases of capital goods in the United States.

Judgment on the Government's actions in this field is bound to depend on the view taken about the American loan. That the "strings" attached to the loan—not the rate of interest, but the extraneous financial and commercial conditions—were onerous, and even unfair, few will be found in this country to deny. The Government decided gloomily that there was no alternative to taking the loan because we could not do without its facilities. The decision will be justified in its eventual results if other countries, including our own Dominions, rescue us from having to put the American Trade Proposals into effect. If that happens, and we are left free to strike reasonable commercial bargains with our principal suppliers, the trade financial obligations of Bretton Woods may turn out to be bearable, and we may be able, given a general expansion of world trade, to make both ends meet. All this, however, is highly speculative, and it needs to be realised that, though so far we have done well with exports in a highly favourable market, we are still an enormous way short of exporting enough to meet our external obligations, and can feel no assurance of reaching the required level, even under the most favourable world conditions.

In effect, the Government have done well with the short-term "export drive"; they have also concluded a new trade agreement with Argentina, and have at least paved the way for a modest resumption of commerical dealings with Russia; and, on the other side of the account, they have negotiated satisfactory long-term contracts for bulk imports of certain staple goods from the Dominions and Denmark. But the long-term prospects of achieving a balance of international payments which will enable us to import what we require for full employment and reasonable consumption are still problematic. It is an illusion to suppose that this target has been reached, or will be reached without more planning and effort.

A LONDON DIARY

THE whole Nuremberg business has been a ghastly mess. At the end of the war I thought drum-head court martial the best way of getting rid of Göring, Streicher and other obvious war criminals and sadists. After that, "denazification," but an end to "trials." Then came the grand idea of building up the concept of international law by making it a crime to plan warfare. Unfortunately, the trial based on that idea has every day looked more hypocritical while the victors were themselves making atom bombs and jockeying for strategic advantages against each other. The judges and advocates have done their best to keep the hearing on a civilised and legal plane, but the last scrap of dignity has been snatched from the proceedings by the loathsome reporting of the executions. Why make a sensation of Göring's suicide? It would have been better, far better, if they had all been given the chance to take cyanide. It would have at least spared us the degradation of these apparently protracted deaths by slow strangulation, described with disgusting detail. Another blunder was to publicise the heroic "last words" by guilty men who will only too easily figure as heroes in the minds of many Germans.

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If the Savoy waiters had come out 15 months ago, the House of Commons staff would certainly have joined the strike. But to-day, as any guest in the Visitors' Dining room soon notices, they are the most hard-worked and good-humoured staff in London. This is entirely due to the revolution which took place in the Palace of Westminster after the General Election. The new Kitchen Committee were appalled to discover that the House of Commons catering staff were fired at the beginning of each Summer recess and then re-hired in the autumn, presumably in order to save money. Inadequate pay and a tipping system made them surly and uninclined to give equal service to the poorer Members. The Committee got to work at once and called in the Union organisers. After lengthy consultations an agreement was reached under which wages were paid all the year round and tipping was abolished. The result was miraculous and disposed once and for all of the silly assertion that waiters prefer the ignominy of relying on tips. Now you have the feeling, when you dine there, that M.P.s and staff alike all feel themselves members of a sensible democratic institution.

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The problem of pensions for retired public servants in the United States seems to have been solved on one level at least: ex-Cabinet members become political commentators. Mr. Ickes and Mr. Welles are columnists, Mr. Morgenthau a radio commentator. Now we can whole-heartedly congratulate the *New Republic* on obtaining Henry Wallace's services as an editor. Mr. Wallace is not strange to journalism, or even editorship, having been editor of his family paper *Wallace's Farmer* before 1933. The *Farmer* has a wide circulation throughout the Mid-West and used to keep the association with the family alive by printing on its masthead "Editor-in-chief Henry A. Wallace: absent on leave as Vice-President of the United States." In the *New Republic* Mr. Wallace can develop a constructive criticism of American policy without the handicap of party ties. It will be particularly interesting to see how far he can develop in detail the implications of his remarkable letter to President Truman.

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I was not surprised to see that the Government of Iceland could not hold together after the Althing had been persuaded to agree to America maintaining Keflavik Airport as a civil base complete with technicians. Everyone in Iceland knows what "civil" means in this context; if America only required Keflavik as a port of call en route for Germany, it could have remained under direct Icelandic control. The strong desire to get the Americans out of Iceland was sufficiently shown recently by the general strike and popular demonstrations in Reykjavik. The least agreeable aspect of the negotiations was the Note sent to Reykjavik from Whitehall, stating that a "bad impression" would be created in London if the Icelandic Government refused to ratify the agreement. Odd how few people in America seem to realise that to Europeans and Asiatics the United States looks at least as expansionist as Russia, and that Britain, constantly attacked in America as imperialistic, too often gives the impression of a respectful yes-man in Al Capone's entourage.

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I am glad that Mr. Attlee has decided to make concessions to the Welsh Parliamentary Party. As Members have found during the recess, there is a good deal of feeling in Wales about the comparatively high level of unemployment. Too many Welshmen attribute their troubles to the indifference of distant officials in London. It is unwise to ignore nationalist sentiment of this kind, even when it is founded on illusions, and the Cabinet has rightly agreed to make administrative changes which will ensure greater co-ordination between Departments dealing with Welsh affairs and give them rather more independence. The Labour Party, in Wales at least, is committed to a measure of Home Rule. But I well understand Mr. Attlee's reluctance to set up a separate Welsh Office: it would complicate rather than improve plans for Welsh reconstruction at a critical moment. The present

unemployment is not due to bureaucratic "apathy" but to the inevitable time-lag between the planning and erection of new factories. Up to now, more than a dozen have been built, at least eighty are under construction, and plans for a further two hundred have been approved. It is worth noting that fewer than forty new factories were built in South Wales from 1919 to 1939. The Government has received too little credit for what it has done in Wales during the last twelve months. It is silly to think that the legacy of two decades of economic chaos can be liquidated in one or two years.

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I have now received a translation of Zoschenko's "libellous lampoon on Soviet life" which was the starting point of the great ideological drive now going on in Russian literature. It is a children's story about a monkey which escaped from the Zoo and gave everyone a high old time before it was "resettled." It is less amusing than most of Zoschenko's stories and, if I had not been told that it was a lampoon, I should have taken it for an entirely innocent, not very successful, story for a Christmas annual. Even if the monkey does indeed stand for a recalcitrant, discipline-disliking Soviet soldier, then the criticism is of the mildest and the sensitivity of the authorities positively pathological.

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Many people must have asked themselves at some time or another what they would do for a living if they found themselves suddenly out of work, without savings and in poor health. A correspondent sends me particulars of a profession which had not before suggested itself to me. During the last three months, he has written 600,000 words which, he says, have been read by thousands of people from dukes to dustmen, in practically every country. Sounds fine, until one learns that his total earnings have been rather under £50. He is an envelope addresser, paid at 13s. a 1,000, which is better than the prevalent rate in the mail advertising business. Firms, it seems, suffer from no paper shortage. What they believe they want is armies of serfs to send catalogues, circulars and reports to addresses carefully selected by a few up-to-date organisations, but usually copied straight from the telephone book (the worst because the smallest print) and from legal, medical, clerical and other directories. Not everyone's eyesight will stand the strain, and new entrants into this remarkable profession can seldom do more than 50 envelopes in an hour, or earn more than 4s. or 5s. a day. But real "professionals," some of whom have actually been doing the job for twenty or thirty years, can keep it up for ten hours a day at the rate of 100 envelopes an hour. After careful consideration I have decided I would prefer to be a lavatory attendant.

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I was talking recently with an officer who has just returned from Jerusalem. He told me that, despite Mr. Morrison's assurances, the notorious Barker Order was never formally withdrawn and that the section of Mr. Morrison's speech which expressed the Government's disapproval was censored in Palestine. I understand that a question is to be asked in Parliament about this. My friend also told me that shortly after the publication of the Order in the English press, the General attended a cocktail party of the American colony of Jerusalem and protested to a senior Government official that the discussion of it in the House of Commons was most improper. The official replied "If I may say so, it is your Order itself that is most improper." The General asked him what the deuce he meant and the official said "Take the case of Lieutenant X, a Jewish officer in the British Army. According to you he may not speak to his parents. Indeed he must regard them with contempt and loathing." There was a pause, while the General considered this situation. Then suddenly light dawned and he said: "Of course, there are always exceptions. He could ask my permission." CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Harold Myers.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

On her 107th birthday, in August, she attributed her great age to a lifetime of hard work and the fact that she never had a boy friend.—*The Star.*

Though the results of the Conference will fall short of the sanguinary expectations which inspired the victorious nations after V.E. day, its partial success will help to disperse the present atmosphere of fear and distrust.—*Central European Observer.*

Atomic Footwear Repair Service.—*Sign on Cobbler's Shop.*

As Burgomaster Oud, of Rotterdam, was escorted to his seat at a Plymouth cinema for a special showing of "The Way We Live," stage amplifiers blared unfamiliar music.

The Lord Mayor, who accompanied the Burgomaster, thought it might be the Dutch National Anthem, and stood to attention. The audience followed suit. So did the Burgomaster.

And nobody knew that the music to which they had paid homage was German—a Mozart overture. —*Daily Herald.*

Col. Peron, President of Argentina, was to-night invested as an Honorary Freeman of the Butchers' Livery Company of the City of London.—*Daily Telegraph.*

'TIS A PITY 'TIS A BORE

WHEN Smuts and Churchill speak of democracy's *mystique*
And once again with mankind's conscience plead,
When Stalin on the air through the iron *portière*
Asseverates the Marxist's moral lead,
When they ask a change of heart and propose another start
To dissipate the haunting fear of war,
Their solemn admonition is staled by repetition—
The common man has heard it all before.

When Conferences reach new heights of downright speech,
As claims of peace on sovereignty encroach,
Advisers from outside their counsels seek to guide
By the strategy of indirect approach.
They call for action swift to heal the fatal rift
They castigate the Blocs of East and West,
But warnings of the oracle are felt to be rhetorical,
The common man no longer is impressed.

The eloquent appeal seems to common men unreal,
No formula for peace can be devised;
Each State against its rival is struggling for survival
And vital needs must not be compromised.
For national security, not ideologic purity
The common people watch their leaders fight,
They do not miss the point that times are out of joint
But see no statesman born to set them right.

We citizens await our not uncertain fate
While delegations meet to pick a bone,
While elder statesmen show the way mankind should go
With majestic and admonitory tone.
The atom- or bacillus-bomb eventually may kill us
Before world equilibrium is restored—
We ought to show our gratit de for every stirring platitude,
But we, who are about to die, are bored.

SAGITTARIUS

NOTES ON ITALY

RIOTS in Rome weaken the authority of the Government, but are not otherwise important. Since the days of Julius Caesar, Rome has been a city of parasites hanging on to the centre of government; it has a constantly moving population, attracted, once by free bread and circuses, to-day by Black Market and get-rich-quickly opportunities. It is in Milan and Turin that we must watch for great events. For the time being Milan is comparatively prosperous, and it will remain so as long as raw materials arrive to keep the industries at work. Turin, I gather from people who have recently been there, is a city of hungry unemployed; violence is only just below the surface. Everyone knows that there are large quantities of arms hidden in Northern Italy, and both the Right and the Left anticipate civil war. The Right, of course, is strongest in Southern Italy, and some people prophesy that Italy will be divided into a Communist North, supported by the Slavs, and a neo-Fascist South, aided by the Anglo-Americans.

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This is an over-simplified picture. The future remains unpredictable. The Resistance Movement in the North was only about twenty-five per cent. Communist when it fought on the Allied side in the last year of the war. It also contained Christian Democrats, Socialists and many who used to be Syndicalists or Anarchists. The Action Party, led by Parri, has disappeared. To-day the Leftist groups have all come under the Communist banner, and no one, I think, could make any estimate of the proportions of the main groups. But it can be assumed that, in the event of trouble, the leadership would be Communist. In conversation with English parachute officers who lived and fought with the Resistance Movement I find a sharp division of opinion about whether class feeling would triumph or whether the Left would remain, at least for some time to come, too nationalist to work with Slav Communists over the border. One possibility which I have heard much discussed but which I myself regard as remote, is that the leaders of the Communists and of the Uomo Qualunque or neo-Fascists might, in revolt, form a temporary alliance based on national feeling. It is noticeable that they have not been attacking each other lately.

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I find it hard to answer when I am asked why the British press has paid so little attention to Italian Resistance, which was not much less effective than the French. I can explain that Britain took a poor view of Mussolini's declaration of war in 1940, and that the Italian troops earned an unsavoury reputation in North Africa and a far worse one in Yugoslavia. But I do not really understand why Field-Marshal Alexander should have been the only Allied leader seriously to encourage the anti-Fascist forces. It is not only the young leaders of Resistance who feel resentful. Almost all Italians feel that they are badly treated by the Allies. The revision of the French frontier seems to them contemptible. If you examine the French claims you find that they have no point except to steal two important hydro-electric power stations which were built by the Italians and which only serve Italy, and for whose use the Italians will now have to pay. The feeling about the navy is even stronger. It was probably not a very efficient navy, but the Italians have a seafaring tradition similar to our own, and sailors, cast adrift from their ships, are now returning to their homes all over Italy, unemployed and bitter. After all, the Italian Navy never even surrendered; it was put "unconditionally at the disposal of the Allies" in the war against Germany, and it did quite a lot of fighting. One battleship was sunk and sailors drowned fighting on our side. No doubt the Italians make too much of this, as they do of all their grievances, but they are undoubtedly

deeply angered by seeing their ships handed over to other Powers. As for the colonies, they have a reasonable cause for complaint that Italian nationals, many of them good colonists, have been sent back to swell the ranks of the unemployed in Italy. It is silly to create such grievances because Italians are not necessarily or even naturally imperialistic and they might have been reconciled to the loss of their ill-gotten Empire. But in the long run the most serious aspect of the Treaty is economic. The Italians feel that everyone is fleecing them. They still ask whether it is true that their assets abroad are written down by the £3 million which are said to belong to the king. Is he to be specially treated and allowed to keep his huge private fortune, while the property of every little Italian trader abroad is to be confiscated? Take again, as an example, the question of occupation costs: the Americans are refunding in dollars the lire obtained from the Italian Government as payment to American troops and the Canadians are also paying four million dollars for the same reason. The British feel too poor, it seems, to show such generosity. The swollen expenses of Allied occupation (including the use by British officers of luxury hotels and including all the goods which they buy in Italy and all the food and wine that British soldiers consume) are paid by the Italians who have to print as many lire as the Allies demand. As it was well put to me: "Every time a British soldier spends a night with an Italian prostitute, the bill is paid by the Italian Government."

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How far any Italian Government can survive in such conditions I do not know. The Prime Minister, Signor de Gasperi, with whom I had a long and interesting conversation, is an Austrian politician by training, and though he was a librarian in the Vatican, his policy is not, I think, dictated by the Holy See. I formed the impression that he really wished democracy to work. But he is ham-strung at every point. The Communists are no longer serious participants in the Government though they hold some minor portfolios and are in a position to prevent a thorough Catholic or capitalist policy being carried out. The Socialists, like their colleagues in other Continental countries, are at sixes and sevens. There are many groups amongst them, but the main division is between the Right-wing leaders like Saragat, Silone and Paolo Treves, who are vehemently anti-Communist and who in certain circumstances might make common cause with the Christian Democrats, and the Left wing led by Nenni, who does not favour "fusion" with the Communists, but who holds, I think rightly, that Socialists should have a strong policy of their own and keep open the chance of forming a government with the Communists.

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If you talk to English residents, influenced by their knowledge of pre-war Italy, they will often tell you that Communism is a passing phenomenon in Italy, not grounded in doctrine, merely the result of frustration and misery. After all, more than half of the population is peasant, and almost all Italians have been brought up as Catholics. They warn you not to take seriously the Red tendencies of Tuscany, for instance, where the peasants are mainly concerned about the price they get for their olives and have never heard of Karl Marx. Many middle-class Italians make this valid point. In Venice, however, I was told by one chance acquaintance that the mayor, who is a Communist, is "just like all the other politicians," cashing in on popular feeling for the moment and capable of belonging to any party. I talked about this with an Englishman who knew him well and I learnt that the report was false. The mayor is an idealistic and convinced Communist. I see some wishful thinking in all this writing-down of Italian Communism. It savours too much of the traditional view, so easily held by British residents, that Italy is a gorgeous museum and retreat for the British which happens, by the grace of God, to be inhabited by a handsome race of people who are expert builders and workers and always happy and industrious while under orders. There is much in the Italian temperament to support this view, but people change. A British parachute officer who worked in the North of Italy told me that, during the last years of the war, he watched little groups night after night studying Marxist doctrine under trained leadership, and it must be remembered that the Communist revolution in Russia was made possible by the land hunger of the peasants who would go, as Lenin said, a third of the way with the Bolsheviks.

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I had an interesting conversation on this point with an ecclesiastical dignitary. I had in mind that before the recent elections, in one area at least, the people were told that they would be refused communion if they voted Socialist or Communist; yet they did so and boasted of it and came back and received communion as if nothing had happened. I asked him why there were so many Communists in a country where everyone was brought up as a Catholic. Was this due to the failure of the Church, or did he think the Communists were really Catholics at heart who would return to their true religion? He said that in view of the extent of Communist propaganda he does not regard four million Communist votes as very serious, and that Communism was merely a reflection of misery and propaganda. As I have said, I have since formed the impression that on this point he was at least partly mistaken. I asked him whether there could be an arrangement between Moscow and the Vatican. On a temporary political basis he thought it not only possible but desirable, if only because of the position of Catholics in territory demanded by Russia. He admitted that the Church was free in Poland, and at least partially free in Russia. He said the persecuting tendencies of Communism in the occupied countries had been Russia's greatest error. "If," he said, "the leaders of Soviet Russia had been clever enough to respect individual rights and religious liberty in the countries they had occupied, Russia would today be by much the greatest Power in the world. Perhaps we must thank *le Bon Dieu*," and he placed his hand in an attitude of prayer in front of him, "that He has not made them so intelligent."

KINGSLEY MARTIN

COURTS MARTIAL

(BY A CORRESPONDENT)

BY way of recognizing that a soldier does not forfeit his right of citizenship when he puts on the King's uniform, his liability to punishment outside the King's Courts has to be regularised by Statute. The Army Act, passed annually by Parliament, provides that, for "military" offences, a soldier may be brought to a "more exemplary and speedy punishment" than the usual forms of the law will allow. But for this, the War Office and the Air Council would be without power, no soldier or airman could lawfully be punished for disobeying orders, and Service men committing crimes against the law of the land would have to be surrendered to the civil courts (where, inferentially, their punishment would not be "exemplary" enough). The arrangement has its advantages. Yet no one acquainted with courts martial doubts that they fall far short of the standards expected of the English conception of "justice" and that, impeccable as are the precepts laid down in the *Manual of Military Law*, the laying down of precepts is not enough.

Examples of court-martial injustice can always be currently found. The case of the mutineers of the 13th Parachute Division in Malaya has followed quickly on that of a well-known barrister convicted of perjury while serving in the R.A.F. and dismissed the Service, and that of a solicitor similarly punished by an R.A.F. court martial for looting. The latter cases were "retried" by the Benchers and the Law Society respectively, the conclusion reached in each case being that the men were wrongly convicted. But the Air Council say that nothing can be done—no re-opening of the cases, which lacked the popular appeal of the Malaya mutiny trial. The way to get a court-martial sentence quashed, apparently, is to frighten the Government. If only you can do this, the Judge-Advocate General may find in the record of the trial such gross "irregularities" as to invalidate the whole proceedings.

Most legally-minded people who have attended a court martial, or even read a "summary of evidence," will know what the irregularities are likely to be. They need be nothing more than the honest blunders of non-legal men sweating over a procedure they imperfectly understand. An Army officer selected for service on a court martial will do some mugging-up in his *Manual of Military Law* and *King's Regulations*, and thereafter, if a Judge-Advocate is appointed, will gladly rely upon him to see that the forms of justice are observed. "A Judge-Advocate must be appointed for a general court martial and *may* be appointed for a district court martial; but in neither case need he be a qualified lawyer." Every other member of the court is quite probably sitting on a court martial for the first time and in all probability he will complete his service without ever doing so again. So when, for example, a prisoner's wife is allowed to give evidence against him in one of the numerous cases in which she cannot in law be a "competent" witness, or when "hearsay evidence" of an important and inadmissible nature—the besetting sin of courts martial — is allowed through the sheer inability of the Court to recognise it for what it is, or a prisoner's bad character is disclosed before a verdict has been reached, an "irregular" conviction may follow and never be challenged.

The remedies being suggested are (a) juries at courts martial, as in other criminal trials; (b) qualified lawyers to comprise the court; and (c) a statutory right of appeal against conviction and/or sentence, either to the present Court of Criminal Appeal or to a specially constituted appeals tribunal of civil judges.

Not long ago the American troops in France and Germany were demanding that prisoners tried by courts martial should have juries. It is not a well-considered plea. True, the members of a court martial combine the functions of Judge and jury; but so do all the thousands of Magistrates, lay and learned, throughout this country—and they try over 99 per cent of all the criminals brought to trial. Of the offenders who are entitled to claim trial by jury, a very small percentage think it worth while; and the number of crimes which *must* be tried by jury has been steadily reduced by Statutes passed in the last forty years. No jury would redress the "irregularities" that disfigure courts martial —and no one, it may be supposed, seriously alleges that the officers comprising a court martial want to behave unfairly in discharging that part of their duty that would fall to a jury. "Fairness" doesn't mean partiality towards the prisoner; and it is instructive to consider for a moment the problem of empanelling a jury of soldiers to try an offence of "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" at a time when the state of *morale* and discipline was generally low.

In the absence of any official analogous to the Justices' Clerk, courts martial should certainly be composed of experienced criminal lawyers. They should be regarded as equally essential to the complement of every unit or command as is the medical officer, the padre or the dentist; and there could be no difficulty in finding the necessary experts from a profession already overcrowded.

The most astonishing feature of the whole system is, of course, the absence of any statutory right to appeal to the King's Judges against the decisions and awards of tribunals untrained in the law. If the Lord Chief Justice himself

sentences you at Assizes, you can go to the Court of Criminal Appeal and plead that he got his law wrong or that he treated you too harshly. If a local Bench of unpaid Justices orders you to pay 3s. costs for letting your dog out without a collar, you can appeal to Quarter Sessions. But if a Court Martial gives you twenty years' penal servitude, all you can do is to "petition the confirming authority." If your petition involves a point of law, it will then be referred to the Judge-Advocate-General, who is a lawyer; but unless he finds that your case was so badly mismanaged that you must be let off altogether, there is nothing he can do. If he thinks that, although the trial was conducted properly, you deserved only about a month's imprisonment, he may go so far as to say so; but effect need not be given to what he says.

The injustice of this becomes so obvious on comparison with the machinery for civil appeals that it is quite impossible to understand why the full right of appeal is withheld. A Departmental Committee which considered the matter in 1938 reported that, whenever a court martial had gone wrong in law, the Judge-Advocate-General's department had put matters right; there had been no injustice in the cases they had considered. But they thought that on difficult points of law there should be an opportunity to obtain the views of the Court of Criminal Appeal. Mr. Bellenger's announcement that a new Committee will be set up to review the situation in the light of recent experience is welcome.

It is only in the armed forces that non-legal people are entrusted with the power of life and death, or (more usually) with that of ordering penal servitude or imprisonment, over other members of their own community. The fact that the convictions they record are mainly for offences "to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" does not justify the slightest laxity in a procedure which is, in the strictest sense, judicial. The whole body of the English law of evidence has evolved side by side with the institution of trial by jury, as an improvement upon trial by compurgation, ordeal or battle; and the members of a court martial are jurors rather than judges. Experienced Judges should have the last word.

MR. RANK'S GESTURE

It was announced on October 8th that a Board had been established to arrange for the exhibition, by the three major monopoly circuits, of independently-produced British films. This step had been taken by arrangement with J. Arthur Rank and the Associated British Picture Corporation. The Board is to include a representative from each of the chief circuits—Odeon, Gaumont-British and A.B.P.C.—the Secretary of the T.U.C., the President of the Cinematograph Films Council, an official from the Board of Trade, a woman novelist, a leading member of P.E.P., and others with less relevant qualifications. It was stated that the three circuits concerned had agreed to show a number of independently-produced British films, and these were to be selected by the Board.

Without doubt, the new arrangement is a slight advance from the old position where an independent producer could not be sure of any remunerative distribution; but although Sir Stafford Cripps is to be congratulated on steering the measure through difficult waters, the improvement is in fact slight.

The number of films to be chosen by the Board is not to exceed six for each circuit in one year. Thus independent producers are at liberty to make a total of eighteen films yearly, any one of which, or all, may be rejected by the Board for reasons that could not be anticipated. As far as is known, the Board has no rules by which to work, and is free to impose whatever kind of standard its members choose. The gentlemen's agreement made by the Rank Organisation and A.B.P.C. depends entirely on their consent; neither is statutorily obliged to attend, nor to act upon the Board's decisions. The scene is the ridiculous one of a Labour Cabinet Minister going cap in hand to established monopoly and begging a little generosity.

Our cinema industry is now at a point where it can either ensure full employment for many thousands of technicians, at the same time creating a new standard of cinema that would show up the majority of Hollywood productions for the shoddy that they are; or it can revert to irregular employment, and the production of meretricious imitations of the worst American trash.

If producers of all kinds outside the monopolies were assured of distribution for a higher number of films per year, the function of the Board would change. Instead of being a selective body, compelled to restrict the activities of independent producers and their employees, it would merely act as an exchange, through which various distributors could bid for the rights to a particular film. Really worthless items would not find their way on to the screen, simply because nobody would bid for them.

The official announcement says nothing of the fate of documentaries that may come up for judgment. Many of the best are not full-length films, and they deal chiefly with fact. Are they, then, to be excluded from the operations of the Board, because of the out-of-date notion that a feature film is fiction, and that a documentary is a "short," a fill-up that does not count? One would not relish the task of telling the starving Yugoslavs who were the heroes of *The Bridge* that they don't count, in comparison with the saccharine trivialities of *Up in Mabel's Room*.

No, the incidental benefits of the Board are little compared with the unfortunate attitude which its terms of reference—or lack of them—display. When *The Bridge* received the careless treatment that it did, an official is reported to have declared that His Majesty's Government was unwilling to appear to exercise pressure on the film industry. Technicians in the industry retorted among themselves that it is the bosses of the industry who put pressure on the Government and on the private individual, whether he be producer, technician or film-goer. The new development displays the same attitude and proves the point. The concession made by the two monopolies is only granted because Mr. Rank and his A.B.P.C. colleagues can well afford it; and it is based upon the concept of restricting production and competition, whether commercial or intellectual. One hesitates to predict, but the opportunities offered by this arrangement for coercion are many. Not that such a practice would be a new feature of the industry; the system of block bookings is a familiar form of it.

Foreign policy is, of course, intimately linked to domestic; that is no doubt why the whole approach of the Government assumes the import of large numbers of American films, to which Britain should try to add a few. This attitude is not only absurd; it is desperately serious, for it may help to create a low cinema employment rate here in more prosperous times. Thus it would be well worth while to adjust the quota rules, so that the number of imported films would be proportional to the total quantity of available British productions.

The trade unions and other organisations concerned have further suggestions to make. Principally, they want to remedy the position where the British cinema is virtually dominated by a flour miller and by American financial interests; they want the formation of a Government-sponsored finance corporation which, by low-interest loans, could give the independent concerns a real chance; they want an end to conditional bookings and monopoly circuits; but most of all they want the opportunity to produce good films, and these in quantity. The formation of the new Board is only a small aid, and it reveals that at present little help can be expected from official sources. The principle that monopoly must not be offended has not changed.

MICHAEL CLARKE

AFTER THE CONCERT

Listener: What did you think of it? Do you know, I believe I'm beginning to like Rachmaninov No. 3 even better than No. 2. And it always does my heart good to hear the old César Franck.

Composer: Oh Lord! If you only knew how bored I am, how unspeakably, irretrievably bored, with the whole of that late nineteenth century gang!

L.: Sour grapes?

C.: Far beyond that. Can't you see it for yourself? all those sequences, the elaborate orchestration, the whole big-bow-wow paraphernalia; and always staring you in the face, inescapably ahead, another rowdy knock-you-down climax.

L.: I sympathise, but I don't agree. You're a creative musician, and you find the immediate past the most distasteful of all periods: it stands in your way emotionally, technically, and—if you'll forgive me—financially. And I can sympathise with the critic too: he hears Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov far too often, and he can't find anything fresh to say about either of them. But remember, I'm neither a critic nor a composer; I'm merely a concert-goer with fewer opportunities of hearing live music than I should like—and I don't overwork my wireless set. Why should you grudge me my Tchaikovsky and my Rachmaninov, my Franck and my Grieg? There are millions like me, and it's not as though we neglected our Beethoven.

C.: No; but you do neglect almost everyone else. Even the cult for Bach and Mozart is not what it was; and Haydn's a rarity. Three-quarters of the music now heard by three-quarters of the public was written between 1800 and 1914, and even within these limits you only care for the big stuff; symphonies and concertos done to death, quartets and sonatas ignored. It's too absurd: like owning an immense estate, and always going for the same walk.

L.: Laziness, perhaps. But we do gradually become more adventurous, and after all we haven't owned the estate for long. A year or two ago many of us were living in a semi-detached villa on Ketelbey Avenue or Haydn Wood Green. Give us time: the Third Programme will help. What amuses me about the attitude all you people take up is that you seem to think the whole future of music mysteriously involved in the temporary over-popularity of twenty or thirty works.

C.: I'm not sure that it isn't. The composer's imagination as well as the listener's ear has become debauched by this protracted and exaggerated cult of a single style as though it were the whole of music. We both need a fresh start, I as well as you. Look at this wearisome business of the climax. It began harmlessly enough with the finales of the eighteenth century comic operas. Then came Rossini with his crescendo; and, of course, Beethoven—a tempestuous soul, for whom gathering clouds and culminating thunder-strokes were the inevitable, instinctive idiom. Unfortunately he set a fashion; and the late romantics began to make a fetish of the climax for its own sake; one and all, and with deplorable zest, they applied themselves to the mechanical whipping-up of excitement, the heaping of more and more ingredients into the pot—thick scoring, lumps of brass, *tutta forza*, and all the rest of it—until, to my taste at any rate, the whole mixture became quite inedible.

L.: There are, I admit, some passages in the Rachmaninov . . . .

C.: My dear chap, far better composers than Rachmaninov are ruined by this perpetual pub-crawl from climax to climax. Even *Tristan*, marvellous structure as it is, seems to need a minor orgasm every few pages during the first two acts; what a relief when we get to the long contemplative stretches in the third! Ravel had an exquisite ear, but he too makes the end of *La Valse* almost unendurable—not to mention the *Bolero*. In Verdi, of course, the trouble takes a predominantly vocal form; just think of those interminable fortissimo cadenzas for soprano and baritone at an interval of an octave and a sixth; no wonder the Victorians thought the man a vulgarian. Fauré escaped; so for the most part did Debussy, above all in *Pelléas*. English composers, on the other hand, are apt to catch the disease badly. Delius listening to the distant cuckoo, I love; but Delius deciding that it's time to make the party go—ugh!

What wonderful, wistful, poetic moments there are in the Elgar symphonies and concertos; but when it all hots up and the brass starts careering downhill in angry semitones, I blush for shame: even the adorable *Enigma* has its blatant finale. But the casualties are endless: look at Strauss, look at Dvorak, look at Liszt. The formula never varies: a climax every other minute, and then we start all over again. Don't you see that the fashion for composing in a series of spasms and jerks has got us all into a fine state of musical jitters? Don't you see the unfortunate result in the fact that we find Mozart insipid, Bach monotonous and the marvellous sustained flow of the polyphonic masters merely incomprehensible? Don't you see—but you think I'm raving?

L.: Not at all. I was admiring your sense of climax.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

"The Snow Maiden," at Sadler's Wells

One of Rimsky-Korsakov's picture-book operas; fresh, lyrical nature music burdened with a certain amount of padding; the whole, it must be admitted, on the long side. But it is part of the business of a good opera company to cover up inequalities in a score with over-all charm and vitality of performance; and this hasn't been done. The obvious first step was to make sure of a decorative scheme which would keep the eye happy even while the ear might be momentarily bored; Barbara Heseltine had a pretty idea for her lake-side village, but her other scenes and most of the costumes were merely gaudy. A more difficult problem, though still more important, was to ensure a reasonably high standard of vocal beauty. Rimsky's voice parts are apt to consist of a sinuously curving cantilena, which demands the utmost grace of manner and charm of tone. Except for Miss Iacopi, as Lehl, and to a lesser degree for Mr. Culbert, who made an effect with the lovely aria of the Tsar, these pleasurable ingredients were mostly absent; indeed there came a moment in the last act when one of the principals, having to sing the same phrase five times over, ended it on each occasion with a loud C of quite formidable ugliness: not a high C, be it observed, but just an ordinary C in the dead centre of the voice. On such occasions, which are fairly frequent at Sadler's Wells, does nobody dare to say: "Desist, sir or madam, from making that disagreeable noise"? In between seasons, do the management scour the country for talent, or do they merely accept what comes to them through the usual channels with a satisfactory diploma? These questions pose themselves anew since the startling success at the Cambridge Theatre of several previously unknown English singers. They do exist, it appears; but they have to be found.

SOME RECENT SCULPTURE

HENRY MOORE is showing some new sculpture at the Leicester Galleries. A full orchestra of form bursts on the visitor as he enters the room, so shattering that it seems unreasonable to expect the fragile walls and ceiling to stand up to the explosion. Reckoned in feet and inches, these statues are not so enormous; size alone cannot explain away their monumentality. A neo-classic figure of Madame Récamier reclining on her sofa, in actual dimensions no larger than Henry Moore's "Reclining figure," would fit quite comfortably into similar surroundings. There must be some inner force impelling the figure out into space; and for our own peace of mind, we make an effort to think away the walls and ceiling, and try to visualise the statue in its natural setting, framed in a semi-circle of yew, seen across an expanse of water, the ripples on the surface of the water continuously changing the shape of its reflection, the sky its only limit. Strolling around it, we find unsuspected indentations and protuberances emerging out of the shadows, as when on a motor journey through unfamiliar country the hills change their shape with every bend in the road. A warm and passionate humanity is the source of the sculptor's inspiration. Moore has been called an abstract artist, but we should not underestimate the emotional element in the reclining female figure and in the motif of the mother and child, nor be so obtuse as to treat as pure form the holes which pierce her body and the exaggerated rotundity of her limbs. These elements are as important to Henry Moore as the motif of the ideal young man to Michelangelo and to the ancient Greek sculptors. God created his statues out of flesh and blood, but Henry Moore chose wood as a medium for his reclining figure, and his problem was how best to translate natural form into wood-form. Each of us has his own concept of woodness. Moore was delighted by the smoothness of its surface and by its rippling grain, and loyalty to his understanding of the material conditioned the form which the statue took. The unbroken surface is preserved at the expense of naturalistic detail, and the grain is used to emphasise the undulations of the body. On the same principle we are made conscious of the bronzeness of his "Family group," and of the stoneness of his Memorial figure for the grounds of Dartington Hall.

Around the walls is a selection of Henry Moore's recent drawings, almost all, I was glad to see, with little red blobs in the corners. We have grown accustomed to the distinction between the architect's and the painter's drawing; the sculptor's drawing has also its special character. The figures are conceived as isolated blocks in an imaginary space, against a flat and formless background, with no furniture except for a sofa or a chair intended for inclusion in the projected carving. In a famous group of drawings, the same figure is viewed again and again from different angles like stills from a film of a rotating statue. Whenever he is "tapping himself for the initial idea," as he himself described the process of drawing for sculpture, Henry Moore is for ever inventing new and surprising designs. But when he encroaches on the painter's territory of picture-making, as in his illustrations for Mr. Sackville West's *The Rescue*, he seems to lose some of his nervous sensibility.

To those who are bemused by the art critic's terms "organic" and "inorganic" a visit is recommended to the Lefevre Gallery where Barbara Hepworth is holding an exhibition of her sculpture. Whereas Henry Moore's figures are translations of powerful human impulses into the language of his material, Miss Hepworth's spirals and ellipses are abstractions in the sense that they have no connection with the world of living matter. Her work has a cold unfriendly symmetry, but affords the same sort of satisfaction as the astronomer derives from locating with absolute accuracy the path of a comet, or the mathematician from solving a beautiful equation.

HENRY CRABBE

IRISH PAINTING

THE brilliance of the Anglo-Irish in the arts of literature and of war has been equalled by their dimness in the arts of painting and architecture. The liveliness of the modern Irish pictures now at the Leicester Galleries is likely therefore to surprise the English visitor. (And it might have been livelier if such reputed academic painters as Miss Grace Henry had been excluded as inappropriate to this particular context.) Some patriot may suggest that the native Irish, as opposed to the Anglo-Irish, have gifts for painting that till recently have remained fallow. The names of Hanlon and Dillon could be quoted to support this theory; but Guinness and Hone are names associated with the Pale; and what about Le Brocquy? I take these as the five most interesting artists in this assembly. (Norah McGuinness and Nano Reid also are obviously gifted, but their art appears still rather undisciplined.) Miss May Guinness, the senior Irish painter, is much more remarkable than one would guess from this exhibition, an audacious hit-or-miss artist who ought to have a carefully selected one-man show in London. Mr. Le Brocquy is highly sophisticated and accomplished, a romantic who invites comparison alike with Colquhoun and John Piper. Fr. Hanlon I take to be the most promising of the younger artists: if not prevented by his priestly duties, he might develop into an international figure. Meanwhile it is Miss Evie Hone who easily "steals the show." Her oil paintings have both inventiveness and sureness, in design, colour and texture. She also shows some small panels of stained glass that are most covetable. I have seen in Ireland one of her large windows, and it was incomparably the finest modern work in this medium known to me. If she could be placed at the head of a studio producing stained glass, a revival of

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this magnificent art might follow. But what body, public or private, can be expected to provide such an opportunity? ROGER MARVELL

THE MOVIES

"The Magic Bow," at the Marble Arch Odeon
"Carnival," at the New Gallery

Goodbye, then, at the Marble Arch Odeon, to old Egypt: Cæsar and Cleopatra trailed off to the provinces, and hieroglyphs are being hastily untacked from the façade. Paganini replaces them; or rather, not Paganini, but Mr. Stewart Grainger, looking sulkily handsome, with his magic bow. He grits his teeth and moves a flaccid hand over the strings: magically, indeed, there rill forth *pizzicatos*. Just as in the other film the unmistakable presence of Mr. Shaw, behind opening mouths, would occasionally relieve the tedium, so here, too, there is a presiding genius whom we never see: Yehudi Menuhin. Mr. Grainger has only, between love scenes and shattering outbursts of temperament ("shut up") to paw the scroll end of his fiddle, and the result is pure Menuhin.

Of course, since he is there, we are very grateful for him. But, as a point of æsthetics, why mix first-class violin playing with third-rate romancing? Why not both good, or both bad? Why drag in a modern master in order to debase his (no doubt) far greater predecessor? For not even the producers of this film, I imagine, would claim for it either fidelity to fact or originality of invention. Shut your eyes and ignore the musical snatches: you might be listening to any studio twaddle about Schubert in Vienna or Mr. Ivor Novello in Kensington. All the old clichés reappear, and so that the hero sha'n't marry the heroine too soon history is called in: Napoleon "commands" the lady (under penalty of death, apparently) to marry someone else; then, after a suitable time has elapsed, the Pope "commands" her presence at a Paganini concert, and all's well. Perhaps there is a moral here. And meanwhile there have been all the usual garretings and gettings-on, jealousies, separations, duels, on the way. Little is required of Mr. Grainger except that he should look a hero (which he does) and be glum and skittish by turns. But why call him Paganini, from all accounts a man of terrifying presence? Next we shall be having Van Gogh in beret and floppy bow tie.

If *The Magic Bow* were merely a piece of carefree vulgarisation, one would mind less. But this is the kind of film on which not only money but also talent (in this case Menuhin's) has been spent; and I am sorry to say that at international festivals *Cæsar and Cleopatra* and *The Magic Bow* are paraded as triumphs of English film-making. Luckily we can do better. But how is the foreigner to know that?

Another English film, *Carnival*, might have been very good romancing indeed if the director had chosen his key and stuck to it. No film has the time for changing styles. Two-thirds of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's novel provides a very animated period piece of London in the 1900's, with Miss Sally Gray giving a performance of determination and charm as a ballet-dancer wooed by two artists and a farmer. Inexplicably, she marries the farmer, and the rest of the story unwittingly rivals *Cold Comfort Farm*. Such switches can be managed more gradually, and sometimes more convincingly, on paper; my memory of the novel is not forcible enough for me to tell whether Mr. Mackenzie got away with it. Certainly the film crashes; and this is a pity, because its love affair is treated in uncommonly good dialogue.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

RADIO NOTES

To what extent is the material of a broadcast talk separable from the voice which speaks it? Should the B.B.C. risk an admirable script's being ruined by the delivery, simply for the sake of allowing listeners to hear the voice of a well-known personality? Is a brilliant radio technique sufficient excuse for inferior material? These questions are not new, but they have been pressing me for answers lately, owing to a spate of widely differing talks, in the Third programme and elsewhere. The writers in question were James Stephens, Feliks Topolski, Salvador de Madariaga, and Alistair Cooke. I take it as certain that, within limits, listeners prefer to hear the author's own voice; the limits being defined by such eccentricities of tone or delivery as do seriously impair communication. Thus, Señor de Madariaga's foreign accent and rather stiff manner, although they may have emphasised the intricate nature of his discourse, at the same time established in our minds the nobility of his theme and the distinction of his personality. With Mr. Topolski, on the other hand, I felt the case was altered. This vertiginous draughtsman is the Koestler of contemporary painting, and he seized the occasion to deliver a swashbuckling plea for extreme romanticism in visual art. I offer no further comment on the substance of his talk, but merely suggest that foreign speakers should make sure their English is really good enough, before attempting a turgid style and a pretentious vocabulary. With Mr. Stephens we are at the opposite end of the scale: his broadcast manner is the perfection of individualised speaking: one could never turn him off: it is as if Sterne himself had returned to life to entertain us. But when the performance was over one could not help asking, with some bitterness, what end is served by asserting, however airily, that Proust is as difficult to read as *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce's later style may be "pure" prose (whatever that may be), but Proust intended, and achieved, something very different. And well as Mr. Stephens read it, the famous *Anna Livia Plurabelle* is, I think, even more fascinating in the recording made by Joyce himself, which could easily have been inserted in the programme at that point. Midway between all extremes a broadcaster like Alistair Cooke easily carries off the palm. His description of autumn in New England, of the changes that have come about there since the 19th century, and of the general atmosphere of the place, belongs to the art which conceals itself.

V. S. Pritchett's *Return Journey* was a long way the best we have had so far. Always interesting, this series has tended—comprehensibly—to err on the side of timidity. But Mr. Pritchett is not a novelist for nothing, nor was he content to leave his "iron-grey grandfather looking like a battle-ship" in the discreet repose of a vivid phrase. Out he came on to the air, and with him a whole crowd of relations. This was a brave, gripping, salty broadcast, the sharpness of which was amply justified by the kindliness and good humour of its presentation.

Do creative writers make good theatrical or radio producers? I cannot believe it; nor can all my admiration for Rayner Heppenstall's manifold talent make me think his handling of Laurie Lee's *Voyage of Magellan* other than mistaken. The script had faults of its own: the sequences were not distinctly visualised as separate pictures, but flowed one into another on a coloured stream of words, like an endless patchwork quilt; the language had not enough variety of mood; the chief characters were over-emphatic, the subsidiary ones too flat. The music was always justified and in itself very beautiful; but the multiple sound-texture was altogether too consistently thick for the perfunctory studio mechanics employed to deal with it; and the emotional balance of the show was constantly in danger from Frederick Valk, who seemed to have no understanding of the microphone, and adopted throughout the tones of the Man in Black. But, when all is said, this programme stands out in my mind as an extraordinarily beautiful and exciting occasion. The authenticity of the poetry was very arresting and lifted the programme on to a more enduring plane than that usually inhabited by commissioned scripts. The performance of Bernard Miles was in itself something to write home about.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST.

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ROUTLEDGE

Correspondence

VISIT TO SPAIN

SIR,—I should like to add a few comments to the article by Ernest Davies in your issue of October 5th, based upon my impressions during a private journey through Spain.

First, the persecution of progressive intellectuals. I had imagined that all the intellectual Left was outside Spain. Indeed, those who fought actively with pen or sword in 1936–39 are in exile; but there are thousands of teachers and doctors, men and women, who are still in the country, many without jobs and living the most precarious existences. When not in gaol (Franco lets them out every now and then to increase his numbers of "releases," but omits to publish how many he puts in again), they are liable to be searched or taken to the police station at any time of day or night, and in the parks or on the beaches there is always someone circling around within earshot. I am not repeating what I have been told; I have experienced the vigilance and seen the prisoners and prison papers.

Yet, somehow, intellectual life survives. A year or so ago Spaniards could not have discussed openly any artist banned by the Falange, but, in this respect, things are relaxing a bit. Blasco Ibañez's novels were at one time banned completely; now a new "complete" edition (not really complete, as all the political writing is omitted) is widely advertised. I even heard that there was an expurgated selection of Garcia Lorca's poetry newly published, but the bookshops denied all knowledge of it. Instead, they offered me the complete works published in Buenos Aires. Apparently this is allowed because the price of Argentine books is prohibitively high for the average reader.

During the war the Spanish people read our propaganda and duplicated it, and listened to the B.B.C. Spanish broadcasts at very real risk to themselves. Now they find news of improving conditions in Europe rather tedious as living conditions worsen in Spain, and they have stopped listening to the B.B.C. altogether; it is too like their own radio. But they are avid for real information, scientific knowledge (the 300 copies of *Discovery* received by one bookshop in a provincial town were sold almost immediately) and news of cultural activities. Despite the Nazi technique and lack of State education, youths of 16–25 band together for cultural purposes, sharing any information they can get hold of, from books on atomic energy to reviews of poetry. Although these lads have grown up with a controlled press and radio, they have nothing of the German Nazi youth mentality, and I was impressed by the numbers of fathers and sons working together.

When I saw the dreadful hovels in the river bed in Valencia I remembered the gravel-diggers' huts in the river bed in Santiago (Chile) and supposed that these were the same. But I was told that this colony was made up of ex-teachers, university examiners and so on. There is a housing shortage in Spain as everywhere (some of the bombed sites in Valencia are still not properly cleared) and Falangist officials get first pick. The fine new building subscribed for and built by the liberal *Ateneo* of Valencia has been commandeered for the Falange headquarters. In Madrid there are quite a number of new buildings, but mostly for official purposes. In the new university (the University of Madrid was razed to the ground during the Civil War) a disproportionate number of bricks are going to the enormous new schools of Naval Engineering and Aviation.

Efforts to make the regime look popular are incredibly crude. The plaza in Valencia has "Viva Franco" painted all over it, but generally these scrawlings lose their appearance of spontaneity by being stencilled. All over Spain the walls are covered with stencils of "Arriba Espana," "Viva Franco" and portraits of Franco and José Antonio. I cannot see that these convince foreigners, still less Spaniards.

Travelling on my own in one part of Spain I ran into the Communist Resistance; in another I found the professional class mostly putting their trust in a Monarchy-Prieto collaboration. The only pro-Franco statements I heard were the parrot-like talk of brainless bank clerks, railway officials and hoteliers—phrases repeated so often that they had lost all meaning for the speakers.

Naturally Giral's Government has the greatest support from those who have nothing to lose, who are already in gaol or out of jobs because of their politics, while those in posts fear that the Republican Government will treat them as collaborators. I agree with Mr. Ernest Davies that Negrin would be a more suitable head of the Republican Government than Giral, and that in any case there should be a wider representation, but I found no trace of the "Spanish pride resenting outside interference"; the Spanish people, in fact, depend on us to help them. They are bitter that we are buying Spanish products (they imagine us floating in olive oil!) as this only helps to keep Franco going. Since German and Italian machinery and equipment stopped arriving, Spain has had no new trams or trains, but the Spanish people would rather stand in queues waiting for a broken down old tram, until Franco has gone and the Republic has been restored.

A. M.

OUTRAGE IN PALESTINE

SIR,—I have just returned from Palestine, where one of the last things I did was to attend a talk given to a mixed audience of Arabs, Jews and Englishmen by the head of the Military Intelligence, who devoted the greater part of his time to defending the British soldier's behaviour. It is surely not these unconscious instruments of anti-Semitism who should be blamed for the numerous British atrocities, but the military authorities, who by their attitude have poisoned the soldiers' minds and induced them to misbehave in any way their ingenuity can devise.

The effect of such continued official indoctrination has been widespread. Perhaps the worst example occurred at Ruhama, a settlement in the semi-desert region of the Negeb. The troops who arrived to "comb" this Left-wing village announced that they had come "to find the men and arms which blew up the King David"—although the Right-wing I.Z.L. terrorists had already admitted the deed.

In the course of the Ruhama "operation," several fires were started, cattle feed was bulldozed into the ground, the water pump smashed, food, clothing and tools stolen and broken, and the dwellings plundered and damaged most seriously. The settlers, who did not attempt to resist, were beaten and prodded with bayonets, and at 2 o'clock one morning an attempt was made to rape a girl. More specifically anti-Semitic activities were the inscription of walls with swastikas and unspeakable insults, the use of private rooms as lavatories and of clothes as toilet paper. These facts are most carefully verified, and I have several photographs of the savage destruction. If these details have not reached England, it may be because the Jerusalem correspondent of one large group of newspapers received cabled instructions from his London superiors about the way in which he was to report concerning the behaviour of British troops.

The whole operation at Ruhama was carried out by men who had been inflamed with hatred and revenge, and as I have pointed out, the official British propaganda with which these soldiers had been injected is based on a fundamental lie. If Ruhama were an isolated instance, it might be charitable to suppress the truth, but it is by no means so, and the common duty is to publicise such affairs as much as possible. There are no lengths to which we should not go to right this wrong, for the infection of Palestine may easily spread to Britain and rot the tenuous web of freedom and personal equality which is our main gift to the world.

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JONATHAN CAPE

ILLEGAL OPERATION

Sir,—In any consideration of the problem of abortion, it is essential to realise that we are not living in Utopia and that we must accept a compromise between what is ideal and what is practicable. It would be delightfully simple if the poverty, illegitimacy, marital discord and sickness of mind, to which S. Bradshaw refers (NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, October 12) disappeared; and we can all work towards that end.

But, in the meantime, while these evils exist, what are we to do about undesired and undesirable pregnancies? Those of us who have, for twenty or thirty years, occupied ourselves with this problem, can have no doubt that the majority of people believe that, when an unwanted pregnancy occurs, abortion is justifiable. Whether the law forbids it or not, they are determined to have it. If they cannot have a legal abortion they will have a bootleg abortion—probably at the hands of an incompetent, even a medically unqualified, operator, in surgically unfavourable conditions, with danger to their life, or health, or future fertility.

Is this in the interest of the community? Even to those who, like myself, regard abortion as something to be avoided if possible, it must be obvious that legalised abortion is less harmful to society than illegal abortion. The figures quoted by the official Soviet delegate to the International Congress of the World League for Sexual Reform, London, 1929, showed conclusively that the mortality and morbidity connected with abortion had decreased almost to vanishing point since abortion had been legalised and carried out in State Hospitals. Even the somewhat contradictory statistics, published later, when the necessity to compete in the race for cannon-fodder, owing to the threat from Hitler, brought about the repeal of the laws legalising abortion (and of course by that time the improvement in living conditions had lessened the urgent need which had existed earlier) still showed an enormous decrease in both mortality and morbidity compared with the old days when abortion had been an illegal, and therefore a bootleg, industry.

I have just returned from Australia, where the same problem exists in an even acuter form than in England. For, in Australia, Birth Control Clinics are practically non-existent, and, in the absence of contraceptive knowledge and facilities, unwanted pregnancies are naturally more common. Abortionists, both medical and non-medical, flourish almost entirely unmolested—it is, indeed, one of the major bootleg activities of wartime and post-war life. The results of bungled operations, carried out surreptitiously in unfavourable surgical surroundings, are appalling, as regards both ill-health and sterility.

Let us have as little abortion as possible, but let that little be legal rather than illegal.

NORMAN HAIRE

127 Harley Street, London, W.1.

FOOD POLICY

SIR,—I have been trying for some time to understand the policy of the Government in the marketing and distribution of food supplies, but it is still beyond me. I am giving below what appears to be the official reply to points of criticism I have made from time to time.

(1) I accused the Food Ministry of fixing maximum prices of fruit, particularly soft fruit, at a level actually below what the fruit-grower received before the war. The effect of this was to cause a severe shrinkage in the acreage of fruit actually planted; with the present level of costs, no grower could continue long in operation. The Ministry do not question my figures but state that in determining maximum prices they took only pre-war prices for second-grade fruit (*i.e.*, culls) which account, in my opinion, for less than 20 per cent. of the total output. They expect and, in effect, compel the industry to produce rubbish.

(2) The Ministry state further that the decline in acreage was due to virus diseases and a shortage of labour. The varieties showing the greatest decline have never suffered from such diseases and labour in fruit-growing is called up without appeal when it reaches the age of 18. Fruit-growing is allowed absolutely no priority in man-power, is not allowed permits for potash fertilisers, nor, as a general rule, for box-wood.

(3) I accused the Ministry of victimising the grower at the expense of the middleman, and consolidating a racket which is absolutely contrary to the principles for which the Labour Party stands. The answer is that "the margins offered to the wholesale trade have been reasonable and adequate to ensure that the produce will be distributed." What is the position at the beginning of October, 1946? It is, shortly: the demand for home production, particularly of cooking apples, has been smothered in the flood of fruit imports from the Continent, wholesalers are refusing to supply containers for the current crops, thousands of tons have rotted and are rotting in the orchards, certain department stores have even stopped selling home fruit altogether, the retailers are still charging the maximum price to the public while the grower receives one penny a pound or, if he is fortunate, twopence.

(4) There is no planning, and no organised distribution of fruit in this country; the grower is not allowed to sell direct either to the retailer or the public if his orchards are new, and he is compelled to offer his production to wholesalers who refuse to take it or offer derisory prices.

(5) To the reasonable suggestion that, if we must import from abroad, we could import greater quantities of potash, timber, paper, agricultural machinery, the answer is that the Government is importing all it can lay its hands on. A worse confession of incompetence it would be difficult to find. We are also told that countries such as Italy have a good deal of surplus fruit which can be used to absorb additional exchange in exporting to Britain. To anyone with a real knowledge of Italy and its economic condition, with a fruit-starved population suffering from a variety of vitamin-deficiency ills, this just appears to be callous nonsense. We are also apparently suffering from a labour shortage in agriculture (created by the man-power policy of the Government) so that, according to the expert, it is better to leave the British crop to rot in the orchards and employ Italian labour in Italy to destroy the fruit market in this country.

The Labour Government will not complete its term if it does not face up to its responsibilities in food distribution and substitute proper Socialist principle for the kind of bureaucratic nonsense which it now retails as an answer to legitimate criticism.

The whole of rural England, which might, with a little care, have been converted to Socialism, is bitterly critical and acutely hostile. Both the Ministry of Agriculture and Food require drastic reorganisation if they are not to pull down the Government. We cannot afford a repetition of the bread rationing fiasco and, if the present practice of throwing the British market open to uncontrolled and, in some cases, State-subsidised fruits while strangling the home producer, continues, there will soon be no home production at all. The margin is close enough in all conscience—29,000 acres of soft fruit and 51,000 acres of dessert apples remaining to supply a population of 45,000,000.

I don't expect a miracle of planning but the present chaos in food production and distribution is something which cannot and should not be endured.

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FOR CARMEN

SIR,—
Permit me a brief reply to Frances Cornford:

Your mind, for things of Spain, has "vague retreats"
Where sadly reign confusion and penumbra:
I'm Andalusian, and "arena seats"
Are labelled, dear Señora, "*Sol y Sombra.*"

SPANIARD

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

TWENTY years ago Sir Stanley Unwin wrote and published *The Truth About Publishing*, which immediately took its place as a classic on the technique of modern British publishing. It has stood up well to the test of time, for to-day, revised and reset, but in almost all important facts and opinions substantially the same, it is republished in its fourth edition (Allen & Unwin, 8*s.* 6*d.*). It is a technical classic, the book of an expert describing in detail the technique of his business. The business or trade of the publisher consists in the purchase of the raw material of books, i.e. MSS, from writers; the working up of that raw material into books by means of printers and binders; and the sale of those books to the consumers, who read or try to read them, through middle men known as wholesale and retail booksellers. The ordinary person who reads Sir Stanley's book with an enquiring mind will observe first that this trade of producing and selling books to the public of consumer-readers is organised in such a way that it may provide occupation and a living to several, heterogeneous classes of producers; authors, publishers, printers, binders, paper makers, cloth makers, block makers, booksellers, and literary agents. He may, too, also observe that though Sir Stanley writes with grace and suavity, there is very often, when he is writing of authors in general, or publishers in general, or literary agents in general, or booksellers in general, an undercurrent of irritated criticism, a distinct flavour of pepper and vinegar. One is not altogether surprised. The composite portrait of an author which I carry away from this book is not attractive: a writer who cannot write, far less punctuate, "who expects one to handle all his unsaleable and unprofitable books (and) turns elsewhere immediately he has anything everybody wants," who breaks his contract, changes his address without informing his publisher and then complains bitterly that his publisher has not sent him his annual account; who never thinks that his book has been adequately or properly advertised; and is continually ringing up his busy and exasperated publisher to enquire whether a review copy of his book has been sent to the *Little Pemington Gazette*. The composite portrait of the fellow-publisher and of the literary agent is hardly less grim. The composite literary agent appears to be rather like an incompetent shark who has tried to camouflage himself to resemble a lifeboat. And when it comes to fellow-publishers, we read that "certain publishing houses . . . will resort to almost any expedient to entice away from his original publisher a novelist whose work has been, or is being, specially boomed."

To the student of economics these composite portraits are familiar. They are the portraits of people attempting to earn their livings and make profits by buying in the cheapest market or by selling in the dearest, or by both. Publishing is a trade, the trade of producing and selling books, or as the euphemists call it, "literature." Being part of the existing economic system—the large-scale, monopolist, capitalist system—it has imposed upon it the iron laws of that system. People who elect to make their living by producing and selling books have to obey those laws, the laws of class warfare within the trade of literature. Those laws compel the author and the publisher, the printer and the binder, the bookseller and the literary agent to struggle, each for himself, to increase his share of the profit or loot which can be raked off the consumer-reader by the sale of books. These men may be noble-minded or crooks, good or bad publishers, bad or even sometimes good writers, but if we are really to tell the truth about publishing, we have to record the fact that they act, and must act, just like soap-makers or soap sellers, iron-founders, coal-miners, coal owners, stockbrokers, and occasionally manipulators of bucketshops.

Unfortunately the raw material of the publisher's trade is not soap or coal or stocks and shares; it is words and thoughts, which may be as valuable as bad soap or a share in a non-existent gold mine, but which also may be those of a Shakespeare or a Newton. That is why the organisation of this trade is of such immense importance. The way in which the soap trade is organised may to some extent determine the colour of our skins, but it will not affect the colour of our thoughts and the texture of our civilisation. That is precisely what the trade of publishing can and does do, for it is not merely an ingenious and elaborate contraption by which publishers and others may make or lose money, it is also the final bottle-neck through which the words and thoughts of the writer and the thinker have to pass if they are to reach the public.

It would have been interesting if Sir Stanley had dealt with this aspect of his subject—the effect of the modern publishing system upon literature, thought and learning. I believe it to be almost wholly bad and to have become steadily more and more pernicious during the last 100 years. Socialists who regard the capitalist system and capitalists as wicked are silly; what never ceases to amaze me about our economic system is its appalling stupidity. It is only our abysmal imbecility which allows us to believe—and act on the belief—that the right way for society to provide itself with bread and butter, clothes, soap, and saucepans is to organise their production and distribution on the basis of an intricate dog-fight for "employment," wages, salaries, and profits. The result is hideous enough when the system is applied to bread, soap, and saucepans; when it is applied by publishers, booksellers, literary agents, and advertising agents to literature and thought and learning, which should be the seeds and flowers of our civilisation, the spectacle is both ludicrous and horrifying.

It was bad enough in the 19th century, in the early days of capitalism. It has become much worse since the capitalist system has changed, and with it publishing, into large scale, monopolist, "big business." Almost up to the end of last century publishing was generally a small-scale, personal, individualist trade. From John Murray, Smith, and Macmillan to Heinemann the successful business was usually a person. He made his profit by selling books at comparatively high prices to a comparatively small public. If the object of the system had been to encourage the production of works of art, of original thought, and serious learning, it would have been a silly system; its object was to put profits into the pockets of the publishers. Naturally it did not encourage the production of works of art and culture, but owing to fortuitous circumstances connected with the structure of capitalism at that time it did little actively to discourage their production. The organisation of the trade made it more possible than to-day to make a moderate profit from the publication of "serious" books or literature, or rather made it less certain that such books would be published at a loss; the competition and overproduction were less severe; the profits to be derived by large-scale degradation of the public taste had not yet been discovered; the prestige value of "good books" in a publisher's list was still believed to be considerable. Individual publishers, like Murray and Smith, were therefore able profitably to publish "serious" books and to offer their authors a living wage out of the profits, and—what was more important—they and the publishing system did not exercise a persistent pressure upon the good writer to write bad books.

In the last thirty or more years, publishing has, with the rest of the economic system, left this stage behind and has become part of large-scale, mass-production industry. All the symptoms of monopoly capitalism are there. At one end of the scale are very large firms, amalgamations, and interlockings; at the other end the small or even moderate sized business finds it increasingly difficult to keep its head above water or a successful author upon its list. The discovery that the largest profits can be made by selling the largest number of a book to the largest possible reading public has revolutionised the trade's structure. Its organisation becomes more and more specialised for the sale of "best-sellers." The determining economic fact is crudely that the profit to be derived from the sale of 50,000 copies of a book is enormously greater than that from the sale of 2,500 copies of 20 books; while if you publish 50 books and sell 1,000 copies of each, you will very soon land yourself in the bankruptcy court. Publishing becomes an exciting gamble, a feverish search for the best-seller. This in itself encourages the growth of large-scale businesses. The chances of finding a best-seller are much greater if you publish 100 books in a season than if you publish 50, and are almost zero if you publish only 10. But if you publish 50 or 100 books with the hope of finding 5, 10, or 15 best-sellers among them, your technique of publishing must be entirely different from that required by the small, old-fashioned publisher's list. Some books are born best-sellers, but the vast majority of best-sellers are made. To make a best-seller all that is required is to induce the public to believe that it is a best-seller. It is here that the modern publisher is forced to grasp the golden key to profits from mass-production—publicity. The publisher's object in advertising and in his other methods of publicity is to induce a very large number of people *all at the same time* to believe that "they must read this book." The words "at the same time" are of vital importance. The best-seller can only be created if the demand for the book is concentrated in a few months or even weeks after publication. This is due partly to the effect of the circulating library system, for if 1,000 people demand a book from their library in one week, the library will require 1,000 copies to meet the demand, whereas, if the demand is spread over a year, it might supply the demand with 10 copies. But it is also partly due to the effect of the best-seller type of publishing itself. Where there is keen competition among a large number of firms for best-sellers, the active life of books becomes shorter and shorter. The ordinary reader cannot read two best-sellers at the same time. Unless therefore he can be induced by Publisher A to believe that book X is a best-seller and to read it at once, he may be induced next week by Publisher B that his book Y is a best-seller and that he must read it at once. In that case the chance of inducing him to read X may well have passed for ever, for the week after Publisher C will publish the super-seller Z.

The indirect effects of the growth of this system upon publishing, books, authors, and the reading public are manifold and are not immediately apparent to people who have not watched it grow from inside. It makes the profitable publication of books which cannot be converted into best-sellers much more difficult. In the last 25 years the active life of a "serious" novel or biography in the bookshops and libraries has seriously decreased and this, I believe, is entirely due to the best-seller publicity booming. That by itself, under a system in which literature and learning depend upon publishers' profits, must have a major effect upon writers and the kind of books they write. In fact the whole organisation of modern publishing exerts overwhelming pressure upon writers to write books which the publisher believes will have "the widest possible popular appeal." Writers are largely unconscious of this pressure; we are born, live, and die in the capitalist system and are usually therefore unconscious of its economics and its ethics, just as fish are unconscious of the water in which they live and die. What makes the system so insidiously destructive of art and thought is that publishers share with nearly all those in power or authority the unalterable conviction that anything which is to have "the widest possible popular appeal" must be and should be tenth-rate. The attitude of those who prepare the B.B.C. programmes is characteristic; the assumption is that the public is composed of half-wits to whom anything first rate in art or thought is ununderstandable and abhorrent.

(The high quality of the Third Programme does not alter this fact. Its merits are definitely intended not for the ordinary person, but for the intelligent or "intellectual" listener.) The words "highbrow" and "intellectual" are used as the surest method of damning anything which is not to be "put across" as popular. This attitude has slopped over into the publishers' offices and stereotypes the best-seller, whether it be a novel, a biography, or a history. The writer, even if he does not know it, is entangled and strangled by it. It creates the degraded taste which it assumes. Yet this vicious circle is, I believe, started and kept turning by an assumption for which there is no evidence. There is no reason to believe that the public must be half-witted and cannot understand or appreciate "serious" literature. But if our masters and teachers treat us from birth as imbeciles, it is inevitable that most of us will be imbecile.

LEONARD WOOLF

A LITTLE OLD FASHIONED?

Industrial Art Explained. By JOHN GLOAG. *Allen and Unwin.* 15s.

The theory at first glance is simple and convincing. I held it myself in the early Thirties—or, at any rate, part of it—and wrote a book about it in rapturous prose. Many books have since appeared on the same theme. And now John Gloag's *Industrial Art Explained* comes up again re-written and nicely timed for the *Britain Can Make It* Exhibition. I do not claim to have invented the theory. I merely want to emphasise that I once believed in part of it myself.

The theory probably arose from the subconscious of the general. And nowhere in his book does Mr. Gloag directly express it. An implication, however, is there. Put crudely, this is the theory. Every age expresses itself in the materials which it uses best. (1) DARKNESS: *the Church in Control.* Medieval people only knew about engineering in wood and stone, and later, in glass, hence, Norm, Trans, etc., to Perp. (2) TWILIGHT: *the Individual in Control.* Renaissance people used brick as well as glass, wood and stone. Then came iron. The first great design of the new industrial age was the iron-arched bridge at Coalbrookdale (1779). From now on, good design fell out of the hands of architects into those of engineers. Architects were still wedded to brick and stone. Some Georgian architects were "good" because they were aware of the nice clean lines of engineers and designed buildings that depended for their effect on function and proportion, and not on decoration. Unfortunately in the nineteenth century progress was arrested by excessive individualism (i.e., excessive decoration) and the last struggles of Christianity (i.e., the Gothic Revival). But all the time the men of real genius were burrowing along in the engineering profession. Telford is very significant since he started as a church architect and ended as a canal and bridge engineer. Probably the most important date is that which commemorates the founding of the Institution of Civil Engineers (1818), the final divorce of engineering from architecture. The great buildings of the Victorian age were the Crystal Palace (the first prefab.), tunnels, bridges and viaducts and warehouses. They were not "great" if they were decorated, since that meant that their time-serving designers had toyed with that corrupt old mistress, architecture. At the end of the century there was sudden darkness before daylight. Architects, fearful of extinction, feverishly revived every style they could lay hands on. Only when inventing new ones like "Art Nouveau" were they significant. William Morris confused confusion by relating medieval architecture to Socialism, ("The work of Morris put back by fifty years the emergence, development and authority of the industrial designer in England"—Gloag). (3) DAYLIGHT: *The Machine in Control.* The best architecture of the twentieth century is to be found in concrete, steel and glass, in motor car and aeroplane designs, and streamlined locomotives. The clean lines of a Rolls-Royce engine are comparable with the meticulous precision of clustered columns in a Gothic church. Each is the unflinching expression of its age. Now we have plastics and atomic energy. The very loveliest and most age-expressive thing to-day will be something made out of plastics by atomic energy—provided we do not ruin it with unhygienic and dust-carrying decoration.

And the upshot of all this is—plain things are good. Decoration and imitation are bad. But because some artists can't resist playing about with brush and pencil, decoration is permitted *provided it emphasises the lines of construction.*

Of course, if you start looking at things, some plain, functional buildings are lovely: but so are a lot of ornate ones. King's College chapel is loaded with decoration which has nothing to do with its construction, so is St. Paul's, so are the Houses of Parliament, the Lord Mayor's Coach, a Chippendale looking-glass, the interior of Covent Garden Opera House. So was the cast-iron Gothic palace at Kew. True, a late Georgian farmhouse, all plainness and proportion and function, is a joy to look at in any landscape, but a prefab. house equally functional and by Crittall standards as well-proportioned, looks awful nearly everywhere. If Mr. Gloag were offered a set of Sheraton chairs and a set of steel ones, both at the same price, for his machine-for-living-in, would he really convince himself of his reasons for choosing Sheraton by the casuistry he displays in his book on one of the picture pages? There he shows a photograph of the base of Bernini's colonnade to St. Peter's Rome and opposite the steel and glass façade of Peter Jones's shop in Sloane Square. His caption runs, "The beginning of a new mastery of materials and forms comparable to the mastery exercised by the architects who worked with the classic orders." The only connection I can see between the buildings is that they both share the name of the chief apostle. And will he fall for this casuistry a second time? Yes. His *bête noire* is Tower Bridge—"mechanically efficient, but otherwise ridiculous", "and its designers had before them such superb examples of industrial architecture as the Forth Bridge", "just another example of the idea that art and architecture could be applied." Yet of all English bridges probably the best remembered and, as he himself admits, "unfortunately accepted all over the world as one of the structures symbolic of London," is Tower Bridge. Drowned in his theory, he may prefer Hungerford Railway Bridge at Charing Cross which has less adornment. But the majority of us, drowned in a deeper theory still, prefer the loopholes and turrets that Sir Horace Jones added to Tower Bridge. Probably it is something to do with liking things just because they looked old, a natural hankering after tradition which no streamlining will extirpate.

The final jog to my pen which made me attack this theory in public was when Mr. Gloag wrote to *The Times* on September 28th to say that the *Britain Can Make It* Exhibition "finally dispels the influence of the Victorian period. It shows that progressive industry is at last liberated from the old cramping belief which confused imitation and disguise with design." I intend no reflection on the exhibition which I have not seen nor on Mr. Gloag as a sincere man and, I hope, despite this difference, still a friend. But I think the cramp and age are his.

Take cramp first. Mr. Gloag illustrates all over one page of his book two door handles "designed" by the architect, Mr. Wells Coates. No reflection, here, is intended on the genius of Mr. Wells Coates. But I must admit that each handle looks like no more than a piece of pipe bent round at the ends and stuck on to a wooden door by what the caption calls "a patent 'secret' fixing process." And each is, I regret to say, "disguised" (the caption says "finished") in a "tinted plastic sheath." If that is all the designing that progressive industry is going to allow an artist, then, boys, get back to your fret-work and inlay your wireless sets with mother-of-pearl. You will so, at least, find some outlet for the natural desire to make things with your hands.

And now for age. Mr. Gloag is not so logical a machine worshipper as the otherwise excellent author who writes a caption under an ornate Victorian villa in a very popular book on architecture (beloved by all "qualified librarians") which says, "with the rise of individualism and the decline of civic sense, the terrace is abandoned for the individual house"; i.e., there was no individualism in the late eighteenth century and if we are to be civilised we must cease to be individuals. That theory is as old as the origins of Nazism. But it is, at any rate, the logical conclusion of Mr. Gloag's theories.

The truth is, of course, that some things are lovely and some are ugly whether plain or decorated. For instance, Mr. Gloag says that the mid-nineteenth century was "the lowest ebb of English architecture." Most of us would see that ebb between 1919 and 1939, if the surface of England is any evidence. It seems that opinions on what is ugly are many. So are theories of beauty. But one of the most cramping and elderly, though not quite the oldest, is this anti-decoration, anti-imitation theory which idolises machines and materials.

J. BETJEMAN

MANNERS AND MORALS

The Pursuit of Happiness: The Story of Madame de Sérilly. By JOAN EVANS. *Longmans, Green.* 5s.

Miss Joan Evans's account of Mme de Sérilly is regrettably short, but it would be much more regrettable if she had chosen to spin her material into a larger work. The title of the book is sad in its implications: Mme de Sérilly seldom touched the happiness she deserved, and this was not through any excessive concentration upon its pursuit. She was married straight from her convent school at the age of seventeen to a cousin twice her age; he was kind, she had three children by him, and then, as the custom was, took a lover. When she was thirty-one she found herself a prisoner in the Conciergerie under the Terror: she and her husband were condemned to death in a farcical mass-trial.

> They only asked us our names, our ages and descriptions. These were the only arguments that took place at our trial. Dumas cut short the accused whenever they tried to speak; not one of us was heard.

Sérilly was guillotined; his wife pleaded pregnancy, and before the falsity of the plea was exposed, Thermidor came to her rescue. She then married her lover, who died five months later. She remarried, her husband died within four months, and three months later she died herself. She was only thirty-six.

In reaction against the romantic nonsense upon which most of us were brought up, and recognising the high permanent value of the French Revolution, we now incline to underestimate the injustice and cruelty of the Terror. The victims were few by modern standards; for the twentieth century has been marked by an unprecedented progress in human beastliness. But the account of the Sérillys' imprisonment and trial still must excite disgust. Cultivated, politically liberal, deservedly popular with all his humble country neighbours, Sérilly had done nothing to deserve his fate, nothing except belong to a class that had monstrously abused its privileges. The murder of such valuable citizens made a rift in France that still impoverishes the nation.

But the most significant parts of Miss Evans's book are the account of the heroine's education and the portrait of the character resulting from it. The convent is described chiefly from the fascinating memoirs of Hélène de Ligne:

> No false code of austerity and sacrifice was imposed upon the pupils; the nuns' test of a girl was whether the other girls liked her, for in their code to be liked was a social and even a religious duty.

Such a test is very hard on introverts—reminds us, indeed, of the attitude usual among masters in our public schools. But the practical results of the education were very different. "To be liked" (*plaire*) entailed in the first place at least an appearance of unselfishness; and the famous *douceur de vivre* that, according to Talleyrand, disappeared with the Revolution, depended not on luxury, which was more conspicuous under the July Monarchy than under Lewis the Sixteenth, but on a tactfulness, a self-suppression, that rendered social life finely harmonious. When Mme de Sérilly first married "she had consciously to remember that in the world one must not express one's view too strongly, however clear it was; or dismiss anyone else's, however silly." This accepted imperative might sometimes lead to conventionality and hypocrisy, but the documents about Parisian life in the last years of the old régime suggest rather a vivid and open-minded society, considerably concerned with political, and indeed all intellectual, problems.

Mme de Sérilly's letters from prison to her children prove that good manners were regarded not as a substitute for good morals but as their expression. "My child, goodness of heart has always been needful," she wrote, "and never more than to you now."

> Be sure, my child, that goodness and gentleness can serve instead of wit, or beauty or fortune. One can do without anything if one has these qualities, for one has all those around one for friends; but when these qualities are lacking, nothing can take their place; and all the wit and all the talents in the world cannot preserve one from the dislike that is given to cruel souls and even to those who are not sensitive to the sufferings of others. Without a doubt you wish to be loved; for that, my darling, one must be lovable; and the best way, the most certain, is to be kind and good.

That such sentiments were widespread is known to everyone who has studied eighteenth-century France. The Duchesse de Choiseul, Mdlle de Lespinasse, Mme de Souza, were as considerate as they were charming, and Mme Récamier continued the tradition. But the Court at Versailles under the influence first of Lewis the Fifteenth and then of the stupid Austrian Marie Antoinette formed an enclave of frivolity, for which beautifully civilised women like Mme de Sérilly had eventually to pay with their happiness, if not with their lives.

Miss Evans has told her story simply and succinctly. Her book should remove many misunderstandings, and is, moreover, intrinsically delightful.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

REX V. REALISM

The Cult of Power. By REX WARNER. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.

Political realism has lately become the fashionable defence for acts we know in our hearts to be morally indefensible. Literary realism, though less fashionable, is still dominant. These essays, an apparent miscellany ranging from Aeschylus to allegory, have a unifying motif in Mr. Warner's hatred of what he terms "the vulgarity of realism" in both spheres.

Like Mr. Koestler, Mr. Gollancz, and many more, he is primarily concerned that

> generally accepted ideals of the early twentieth century, such as toleration, kindliness, objective truth, freedom, have been replaced in many people's minds by their exact opposites. More remarkable still is the enthusiasm with which people have accepted the substitution.

We have been forced, in our necessary revolts, to shatter old faiths, but we have nothing to replace them. Some have tried to supply the need, or to pretend that it does not exist. Lawrence tried, with "his insistence on blood and sex and maleness," but as Mr. Warner observes:

> Men have gone to bed with women for very many years now, and have usually enjoyed it. But this enjoyment is not sufficient in itself to form the basis of a new outlook on life.

Nor is Marxism enough. Though "historical materialism . . . is an extremely helpful method," he argues that

> on all problems of morality and psychology Marx is strangely muddled and inconsistent. Here is the great gap in his theory which stares one in the face and yet over which his disciples somehow skip, hop or jump, to the great prejudice of their own cause. Why do men act in ways which are socially "good" or "bad"? Why should they wish to subscribe to a general brotherhood of man?

Mr. Warner does not discuss the possibility of re-examining Christianity (he refers only to "bogus religious revivals led by elderly generals,") but he suggests that:

> the only reply to the cult of individual or racial power and violence is the actual practice of general justice, mercy, brotherhood and understanding.

These thoughts preoccupy him no less in the literary essays—one on Dostoievsky fills a third of the book. In another he puts forward his belief (which I feel is very sound, possibly because I have held it so strongly myself for so many years) that as so few children can ever become classical scholars the others should get the essence of classical literature in translation, since therein "the fundamentals of our problems are stated with an extraordinary clarity." Thus we may "not only come to realise the unity of history and of mankind, but act so that we may remain alive on the surface of the earth."

Time was when essays had to treat charmingly of trivialities: these are emphatically about something, indeed *the* thing of supreme urgency. Warner may lack the grace of Forster and the guts of Orwell, but the book places him among the best contemporary writers in this field. No Abinger harvest perhaps, but a crop of honest thought, as good as bread.

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The Three Spheres of Society. By CHARLES WATERMAN. *Faber and Faber.* 12s. 6d.

Mr. Waterman recognises that unrestricted private enterprise leads to gross exploitation, and that the State is successfully breaking the power of capitalism by taking to itself ownership of the means of production. But he thinks that this method is disastrous, because, by uniting political and economic power, it threatens to destroy individual initiative and originality. The right policy, he maintains, is to organise the "spiritual, political and economic spheres" in relative independence. Most of his stimulating and, indeed, provocative book is an attempt to apply this principle to the problems of Britain to-day. Economic life, he argues, should be run mainly by public utility corporations and "firms," with ownership vested in boards representing their own managers, workers, consumers, and

White of Selborne and His Times
BY W · S · SCOTT
There were in truth many Gilbert Whites, and this book is less concerned with White the naturalist than with "Busser" White and his undergraduate friends such as Harman Leece, "whose head was furnished like a masquerade"; Gil: White the somewhat inadequate Junior Proctor of a dormant University; White the gardener and grower of melons and succades; White the unsuccessful aspirant to the headship of Oriel; White with a roving eye, ever in search of "a thoro' good sort of Damoiselle"; White the lover of children and all those in distress—(did he not provide a petticoat for Tull's naked wench?); White the humorist, who could waywardly turn aside from birds and beasts to a description of Goody Hampton, "my weeding-woman, who might well be thought a man excepting that she wears petticoats, and now and then has a child"; and finally White the good companion, selfless friend, and keeper of an open house for all who came. In a word, the real White.
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other relevant interests. Though in some ways his scheme is a sort of liberal version of guild socialism, it might result merely in a disguised capitalism. He claims to avoid this danger by his principle of "conditional ownership." Every owner is liable to have his property confiscated by the political state if his use of it violates certain fundamental "human rights."

In the "spiritual sphere" also, Mr. Waterman insists on relative autonomy. Schools, for instance, are to be controlled by boards representing mainly the teachers and parents of the school. State education is condemned, as leading to regimentation and the prevention of experiment. The State medical service also is condemned. In both fields the State must help financially, but "he who pays the piper must *not* call the tune."

Now the principle of delegating the State's authority to vocational corporations is valuable; but only on condition that power remains firmly with the State. For this reason ownership, too, must be secured unconditionally to the State, as the final democratic authority. Otherwise, the "economic sphere" may contrive a dictatorship. But many of Mr. Waterman's suggestions, suitably qualified, might well be incorporated in a genuinely socialistic order, to keep its temper liberal.

The principle of the "three spheres" is adopted from Rudolph Steiner, who, though he rightly insists on the urgency of clarifying and deepening experience, is in some ways vague and wild. Mr. Waterman is an enthusiastic follower of Steiner, accepting his "spiritual science" of anthroposophy. This appears to rest on the conviction that modern man, in developing the precise individual self-consciousness, has lost other, supra-sensory forms of consciousness, familiar to primitive man; forms which united him far more closely to his fellows and to the "fundamental spirituality of the universe." This narrowing of the focus of consciousness is supposed to have caused our exaggerated individualism and intellectualism. We have now to widen the focus again, to recover the lost consciousness, but we must learn to experience it with a precision impossible to primitive man. Meanwhile, says Mr. Waterman, modern science sees the universe as completely meaningless and desolate; and until we recover a sense of its meaningfulness, we shall never create a worth-while society.

But surely we can quite well find a "meaning" in life, and create a worth-while society, without suprasensory insight into the "meaning" of the universe. The notion of a lost form of consciousness may, or may not, be true. But our trouble is simply that, through the impact of our incomplete science, we may lose faith in the most developed forms of consciousness *known to man today*. Developed personal awareness and behaviour, in community with others, contain the only sort of "divine sanction" that is needed. Creative manual, æsthetic, intellectual and social activitives are their own justification.

The theory of the lost forms of consciousness is not necessary to Mr. Waterman's position. His concern is to devise a social order which will maintain the integrity of the individual. For him, I think, the individual is more "real" than society. No group, he says, can ever do what a genius does. And without a wealth of brilliant originating individuals no society can thrive. True, indeed! But in the concrete experience of love and of comradeship in a common cause, the individual, though he remains a distinct centre of consciousness, does in an important sense participate in something more worth while than his bare individuality.

OLAF STAPLEDON

AN AMERICAN FRIEND

America's Stake in Britain's Future. By GEORGE SOULE. *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. Soule's book was written for American readers and was finished before the loan agreement was made. Indeed, one of the most curious things about it now is his insistence that Great Britain would not want, and would be too proud to take, a loan from the United States. For the present edition Mr. Soule has written a new introduction, addressed to English readers, and in this he recognises his mistake, but says, quite truly, that it does not affect the rest of his book.

The book as a whole is an attempt, and for the most part an excellent attempt, to get the American public to see things from a British angle as well as from its own. He stresses the fears felt in Great Britain that the tying of the British economic system to that of the United States may put this country at the mercy of an American depression, and that there is every likelihood of such a depression coming about. He recognises, with reasonable fairness, that the American policy of "no-discrimination" means in practice outlawing all discriminations which Americans happen to dislike, while retaining full freedom to practice those of which they approve—such as shipping preferences, tied loans for the purchase of United States goods, and so on. And of course he emphasises the point that the sort of world trading system the American State Department demands can work at all only if the Americans themselves import freely from the rest of the world and offset any surplus in their balance of payments by steady investment abroad.

In fact, Mr. Soule is so fair to the British point of view and so ready to appreciate British necessities, that one feels again and again in reading his book how little hope there is of his persuading any large section of the American public. He is himself so evidently a "planner," a full advocate of the new Keynesian economics, if not more, a more than "New Dealer," and an internationally-minded person whose conception of internationalism is not that all other nations ought to be induced to behave exactly like his own.

The fault in Mr. Soule's analysis of British conditions is that, writing before the Labour victory, he allowed himself to assume a different kind of British Government from that which actually holds power, and took his estimates of British prospects and outlooks mainly from non-Socialist sources—above all from P.E.P., which acted as a sort of godfather to him while he was making his preparatory studies in this country. This induces in him—although certain hesitations on his part peep out at times—a higher estimate of the potentialities of a purely Keynesian approach to British economic problems than is usually found, at any rate among Labour Party supporters. Moreover, any book written some time ago is almost bound to underestimate the interdependence between the international, political and economic factors. During the present year, for example, the existence of the Loan Agreement has been a powerful factor in strengthening the tendency towards an Anglo-American political line-up against the Soviet Union.

In general, however, Mr. Soule's book is as fair and balanced a statement of the British position vis-à-vis the United States—in economic matters, I mean—as one could well wish for. Its chief interest for English readers is bound to lie in the light which it throws on the things that it is hardest and most necessary to make the American public understand. Mr. Soule makes it clear that the Americans to whom he is addressing his homily just have no idea that the main

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reason why much foreign opinion looks askance at the State Department's plans for currency stabilisation and unregulated international trading is that it is terrified of tying the whole world tightly up to a giant who may topple over at any moment. He also reveals that most Americans still think that the great depression of the Thirties was thrust on them by some evil force in Europe, and are quite unaware that they themselves were responsible for it, and by its means inflicted crushing damage on other nations.

Let us hope many Americans have read Mr. Soule's book, and have been influenced by it. But I for one cannot help wishing he had been a little less fair to us, or perhaps more than fair; for if he had, there would have been more hope of American opinion attending to his sheer, hard facts.

G. D. H COLE.

NEW NOVELS

The Folded Leaf. By WILLIAM MAXWELL. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Sweet River in the Morning. By WINSTON CLEWES. *Joseph.* 9s. 6d.

Rehearsal Under the Moon. By ADAM DE HEGEDUS. *Nicholson and Watson.* 8s. 6d.

One Man in His Time. By STEPHEN D. FRANCES. *Pendulum Publications.* 7s. 6d.

Lebanon. By CAROLINE MILLER. *Muller.* 8s. 6d.

The Single Pilgrim. By MARY ROLAND. *Sampson Low.* 8s. 6d.

Every Good Deed. By DOROTHY WHIPPLE. *Murray.* 5s.

Halfway Down the Cliff. By DIANA GARDNER. *PL.* 6s.

The holiday season is over. The novels now pouring from the presses clearly mean something to their authors and publishers. The reviewer, settling down for the winter, feels kindliness creeping over him like senility. The season of remorse approaches. The self-punishment mechanisms come into play. I have found myself looking at far more of the new novels than I ever intended. There is nothing wholly first-rate in the list above. And yet there are flashes of worthiness in them all, even in the Arcadian silliness of Pulitzer Prize winner *Lebanon*, perhaps most obviously in the confident trifle by Mrs. Whipple with her three Book Society choices behind her. And in the cases of Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Clewes and Miss Gardner, there is something more than worthiness. There is a sense of unfolding promise, an anticipation of spring lists to come.

One Man in his Time begins like a Thurber parody on the Californian tough school. Its opening sentence, believe it or not, is :

"The first time I saw a man die it made me laugh."

Mr. Frances is a real proletarian writer. Not only is the matter proletarian, but the manner, the taste, the attitudes struck. *One Man in His Time* is a crude, first-person narrative or string of narratives, boastful and self-pitying, about a back-street childhood, about the dole, about fighting in the Spanish war, about sex and about prison. Mr. Frances's "I" brags how he posed for dirty photographs, how he cheeked the Prison Governor, how he set a police-court by the ears and in general what a fine, big-hearted, ill-treated fellow he is. His simplicity is endearing, and there is considerable narrative skill of a not very difficult kind.

Mr. de Hegedus is also a natural. It is true that his scene is set in Mayfair and that his intentions are satirical, but this novelist hero is so unlike any recognisable specimen and this pugilist with his yearning for culture so unwittingly wild a caricature that one looks for the missing clue. It is to be found, I think, in the fact that Mr. de Hegedus is an unconquerable foreigner, confronting the English scene with more eagerness than insight. There is a jolly plot about the novelist cashing in on the publicity value of the pugilist's name. There is a love triangle. And again the narrative is ebullient if not skilful.

The Single Pilgrim appears to be an English novel, though it was first published in America and Sweden, those two great homes of social worthiness. It is about a girl catching syphilis as the result of a misunderstanding, and one American critic is quoted on the dust-cover as saying, "It took courage to write this book, and it takes courage to read it." I doubt this. After all, one writes about V.D. with the blessing of the Ministry of Health and the full concurrence of West End theatre audiences. It takes courage to read the book all through, but there is an agreeable use of the kingfisher as a master-symbol.

That leaves us with the three best of books. Mr. Clewes published two years ago a novelised portrait of Dean Swift called *The Violent Friends*. It was admirable. Its violence, its delicate colouring, its convinced tenderness, made an extremely difficult and too frequently handled theme come alive in the most extraordinary way. This time, Mr. Clewes has again got hold of a disadvantageous theme, juvenile delinquency. It is a theme about which psychologists are busy saying many useful things, and Mr. Clewes is not a psychologist, he is potentially a high-grade romantic novelist. He has handled his theme with a complication of method which I think excessive, but which impresses me as a remarkable demonstration of misapplied strength. When Mr. Clewes disencumbers it of set, external themes, all this high-powered promise will become active talent.

The Folded Leaf follows the course of friendship between a born athlete and a narrow-chested sensitive, through high school and college in and near Chicago, Illinois. Misunderstanding, college snobberies and jealousy over a girl end in the attempted suicide of the more nervy of the two. It is not to be expected that an editor of *The New Yorker* should write either a tedious or a stupid novel. On the other hand, it is not to be expected that a brilliant editor should also be a top novelist, since his energies are divided. *The Folded Leaf* is a piece of work firmly accomplished, its detail freshly observed and copious. It is not easy to describe suicide attempted by the untidiest of means (a razor) without striking a false note, and Mr. Maxwell does so. Of these eight books, this is the one I most admired. What I think it lacks is creative anguish, internal necessity, the difficulties still apparent in Mr. Clewes.

Miss Gardner's short stories have what I seem to remember the more venerable critics of fiction calling "freshness and charm." They are slight. The touch is delicate, the irony discreet. I think the collection too miscellaneous. A trace of obsession, greater extremities of mood and a less frequent change of scene might have caused the sum to be more than a simple addition. The publishers invite a comparison with Dorothy Parker. This, I fear, is nonsense. Dorothy Parker is pitiless and leaves nobody unscathed. The victims of Miss Gardner's satire are a few accepted types, and even they are viewed with a certain optimism, like elders first questioned by a young girl.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

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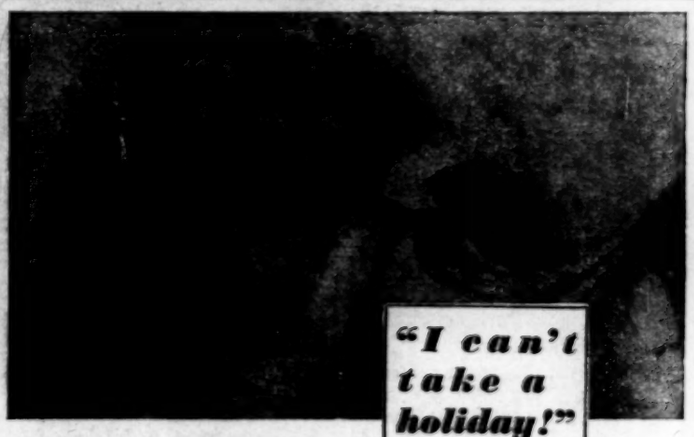

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